AN

ENQUIRY

AFTER

HAPPINESS.

In THREE PARTS.

By RICHARD LUCAS, D. D.
Late Prebendary of *Weſtminſter*.

VOL. I.

Of the Poſſibility of obtaining HAPPINESS.

Κακὸς ἰκεῖνο φιλοσόφου λόγου ὑφ' ὃ μηδὲν ἀνθρώπῳ παθεῖν θεραπεύεται· ὥσπερ γὰρ ἰατρικῆς ἐκ ἄφελος μὴ τὰς νόσους ἐκβαλλούσης ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων, ὕτως δὲ φιλοσοφίας εἰ μὴ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς κακὸν ἐκβάλλει. Pythag. apud Stob. Serm. 80.

Qui quod tibi parum videtur eruditus, ea cauſa eſt quod nullam Eruditionem eſſe duxit, niſi quæ Beatæ vitæ Diſciplinam juvaret. Cic. de Finib. Bonor. & Mala.

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TO THE READER.

IT has pleaſed God, that in a few years, I ſhould finiſh the more pleaſant and delightful part of life, if ſenſe were to be the judge and ſtandard of pleaſure; being confin'd, (I will not ſay condemn'd) by well nigh utter blindneſs, to retirement and ſolitude. In this ſtate converſation has loſt much of its former air and briſkneſs: Buſineſs (wherein I could never pretend to any great addreſs) gives me now more trouble than formerly; and that too, without the uſual diſpatch or ſucceſs. Study (which is the only employment left me) is clogg'd with this weight and incumbrance; that all the aſſiſtance I can receive from without muſt be convey'd by another's ſenſe, not my own; which it may eaſily be believ'd, are inſtruments or organs as ill fitted, and as aukwardly manag'd by me, as wooden legs and hands by the maim'd.

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In this caſe, ſhould I affect to procure myſelf a decent funeral, and leave an honourable remembrance of me behind; ſhould I ſtruggle to reſcue myſelf from that contempt to which this condition (wherein I may ſeem loſt to the world and myſelf) expoſes me; ſhould I ambitiouſly affect to have my name march in the train of thoſe All (though not all equally) great ones, Homer, Appius, Cn. Aufidius, Didymus, Walkup, Pere Jean l'Aveugle, *&c. all of them eminent for their ſervice and uſefulneſs, as for their affliction of the ſame kind of mine; even this might ſeem almoſt a commendable infirmity: for the laſt thing a mind truly great and philoſophical puts off, is, the deſire of glory. Hence* Tacitus (Hiſt. Lib. 4.) *cloſes his divine character of* Helvidius Priſcus *thus;* Erant quibus appetentior fama videretur, quando etiam ſapientibus cupido gloriæ noviſſima exuitur. *But this treatiſe oweth neither its conception nor birth to this principle; for, beſides that I know my own inſufficiency too well to flatter myſelf with the hopes of a romantick immortality from any performance of mine, in this ingenious and learned age; I muſt confeſs, I never had a ſoul great enough to be acted by the heroick heat, which the love of fame and honour hath kindled in ſome.*

——Tuta

——Tuta & parvula laudo.

I have ever lov'd the ſecurity and contentment of privacy and retirement, almoſt to the guilt of ſingularity and affectation.

But the truth is plainly this, the vigour and activity of my mind, the health and ſtrength of my body (being now in the flower of my age) continuing unbroken, under this affliction; I found, that if I did not provide ſome employment that might entertain it, it would weary out itſelf with fruitleſs deſires of, and vaina ttempts after, its wonted objects; and ſo that ſtrength and vivacity of nature, which ſhould render my ſtate more comfortable, would make it much more intolerable.

I confeſs, my zeal for publick good by the propagation and endearment of divine truths, was leſs fervent in me, than could well become the particular obligations of my profeſſion, or the common ones which every chriſtian, in proportion to his talents, lies under. I was almoſt induc'd to believe, that this chaſtiſement which had remov'd me from the ſervice of the altar, did at the ſame time diſcharge me from all duty owing to the publick: but my good friend Mr. Lamb

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revived the dying ſparks of a decaying zeal, and reſtored me to a proper ſenſe of my duty in this point; for whether by deſign, or by providence, governing chance, I know not (for he never ſeemed to addreſs or deſign the diſcourſe particularly to me) he had ever and anon in his mouth this excellent principle, that the life of man is to be eſteem'd by its uſefulneſs and ſerviceableneſs in the world. *A ſober reflection on this wrought me up to a reſolution ſtrong enough to contemn all the difficulties, which the loſs of my ſight could repreſent to me in an enterprize of this nature. Thus you ſee on what principle I became engaged in this work: I thought it my duty to ſet myſelf ſome taſk, which might ſerve at once to divert my thoughts from a melancholy application on my misfortune, and entertain my mind with ſuch a rational employment as might render me moſt eaſy to myſelf, and moſt ſerviceable to the world. Being now abundantly convinc'd, that I am not releaſed from that duty I owe that body, of which I am ſtill a member, by being cut off from a great part of the pleaſure and advantages of it: therefore, like one that truly loves his country, when no way elſe is left him, he fights for it on his ſtumps; ſo will I ever, in the remains of a broken body, expreſs, at leaſt, my affection for mankind,*

and breathe out my laſt gaſp in their ſervice.

The fitneſs and tendency of this ſubject to ſerve theſe ends, is ſo apparent, that I will not impertinently detain the reader by a juſtification of this choice. How fit I am for it, will be beſt judged by the performance: yet, that this may not ſuffer any diſadvantage from ſuch prejudices with which the conſideration of my ſtate may eaſily prepoſſeſs men, I think myſelf obliged to obviate them by a word or two.

I have had ſo much experience of all the ſeveral pleaſures, that I am ſufficiently capable of ſetting a true rate and value upon them, and of judging their ſubſerviency to true happineſs. And I am ſo well acquainted with trouble and affliction, that I am ſufficiently ſenſible, as of the weakneſs of human nature, and miſery of this mortal ſtate; ſo of the neceſſity and power of virtue, in relieving and ſupporting man under both: And, after all, my mind lies now in the body (like a ſoul in a ſeparate ſtate) retir'd, as from the pleaſures, ſo from the troubles of the world; and is therefore the more able to paſs a free and more diſpaſſionate judgment upon both.

It may probably be feared, that the ſame ſhould befal me, which has many Monkiſh *writers; who, being much retir'd from the world, having much leiſure and few books, did ſpin out every ſubject into wandering mazes and airy ſpeculations; like plants, which, deſtitute of a well manur'd and fat ſoil, run all into the exuberancy of leaves and fruitleſs ſprigs: but the commerce I ſhall maintain with the world, may in part prevent this error; and the nature of the ſubject, ſo fruitful of many neceſſary enquiries, will of itſelf lead me on to uſeful and profitable thoughts.*

There is one thing which may be by ſome objected againſt my manner of treating this ſubject, the freedom I uſe in it being not altogether ſo common to my profeſſion; but, I hope, it will not be found, that I have abuſed the liberty I have taken, to the diſparagement of the leaſt truth of our religion, or to the leaſt diſcouragement of virtue; and therefore, I think, it cannot juſtly reflect any diſadvantage upon my calling.

Beſides, I have in a former treatiſe, wherein I deſign'd the ſame end, the happineſs of mankind, *treated this ſubject in a manner ſuited to the generality of readers: but this diſ-*

courſe

courſe I deſign for ſuch who are not content to ſubmit to inferences deduced from received principles, unleſs they can be fairly convinced of the reaſonableneſs and truth of the principles themſelves. Nor ſhould I think it any crime, were I maſter of ſuch talents, if I did mingle with neceſſary truths, all that variety of thought, all that fineſſe and briſkneſs of fancy, which might render them as delightful as uſeful; the example of God himſelf in the great work of the creation, would juſtify this liberty, who has created as well leaves and flowers, as herbs and fruit: And in the variety and beauty, in the colours and figures of all that he has produc'd, he appears plainly to have made proviſion, not only to feed the appetite, but even the fancies of his creatures.

There is, after all, I confeſs, one thing that ſtands in need of an excuſe; which is, the publiſhing what ſhould come forth a juſt treatiſe, by ſmall parts. To this I may truly ſay, having laid together all the materials I ſaw neceſſary to compleat this diſcourſe, I found it grown unavoidably to that voluminous bulk, that I took this method, partly out of compliance to the eaſe of my reader; but eſpecially in compliance to my own; for in my preſent circumſtances I ſaw no other way to avoid that confuſion which would inevi-

inevitably have diſorder'd the contexture of a long diſcourſe, if I ſhould have charged my memory with the contrivance and connection of ſo many and various parts at once: and I foreſaw, that all the ſtrength of my mind, which ſhould be collected and united in the treating every ſingle argument, would be unprofitably ſpent in diſtracted, divided, and imperfect efforts.

THE INTRODUCTION:

OR, A *Brief* SCHEME *of the Deſign of the* WHOLE WORK.

TO inform man what is his true and proper happineſs, and to mark out before him the right way to it, hath been, and ever muſt be, the aim of all philoſophy, and all religion; and yet ſo numerous have been and are the diſputes on this ſubject, and ſo ſeemingly inſuperable the difficulties which encounter us in every way, that the *deſpair* of attaining happineſs, at leaſt in this world, ſeems almoſt as univerſal as the *deſire* of it: and as nature will never give over the purſuit of it, ſo will man never forbear the tragical complaints of his diſappointments, and the raving exaggerations of human miſery. That therefore I may attempt at leaſt to treat this ſubject ſatisfactorily, I will endeavour,

Sect. 1. To ſhew you, that happineſs is not a mere airy and imaginary notion; but is a real ſtate, and really attainable; and that our diſappointments and unſucceſsfulneſs muſt be imputed to ourſelves: and this ſhall be the work of this preſent volume.

Sect. 2. To explain the nature of happineſs, to examine wherein it conſiſts, and what is the high-

way

way to it: in which to proceed ſucceſsfully, I thought the plaineſt method I could take, would be this, to fix and define the notion of the moſt abſolute and compleat happineſs, that ſo we might diſcern what it behoved us to aim at, and how near we could approach the perfection of happineſs. Now the moſt perfect idea of happineſs that the mind of man can frame, is this: *Happineſs is the ſtate of a perfect being in the unmix'd, uninterrupted, and eternal enjoyment of the moſt perfect pleaſure:* Such I conceive to be the happineſs of God himſelf.

In this definition there are *three parts*, which manifeſtly appear to be the ingredients of a divine happineſs.

First, Perfection of being. *Secondly*, Freedom from trouble. *Thirdly*, Eternal enjoyment of the moſt perfect pleaſure.

It's therefore now evident, that to diſcover the nature of human happineſs, and the way to it, I am oblig'd to diſcourſe,

1. *Of the being of man, and its perfection.*
2. *Of indolence, or freedom from pain or trouble.*
3. *Of fruition, or the enjoyment of pleaſure.*

Each of which ſhall be the ſubject of a diſtinct volume. And becauſe there may ſome queſtions ariſe of a more general nature; ſuch as, Whether every man's particular happineſs ought to be dearer to him than the happineſs of another; or whatever elſe can be imagined? *Secondly*, On ſuppoſal that an intire happineſs cannot be attained; what part then of it ought to be preferred? and ſuch like: I will therefore,

Sect. 3. Aſſign a particular volume for the diſcuſſion of ſuch queſtions, and the eſtabliſhment of ſuch inferences as will naturally reſult from the former diſcourſes.

THE

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AN

An Enquiry after HAPPINESS.

SECT. I.

Of the motives to this enquiry, and of the objections which may be form'd againſt it.

CHAP. I.

The importance, the neceſſity of it.

THE deſire of happineſs is the firſt, moſt powerful, and moſt univerſal principle of human actions: this moves the prince and peaſant, the learned and the ideot: revelation and reaſon take this for granted; all laws, both divine and human, propoſing our happineſs as the ſole and ſufficient motive to our obedience. *The importance of this enquiry.*

But all this while, tho' all ſorts of religion and government do unanimouſly conſent in the propoſal of this one general end; yet ſo great is the diverſity (I may ſay contrariety) in the methods in which they purſue it, that it ſeems to imply the diſcovery of happineſs a matter of no leſs uncertainty than importance; there being neceſſarily as great a variety in the opinions

of men about it, as in their lives and actions, or in the forms of religion and government in the world: ſince all theſe ſeem, according to the different judgments of men, ſo many different paths which lead to it.

And yet till I have fix'd the notion of happineſs, and found out what it conſiſts in, 'tis impoſſible I ſhould live rationally: how ſhall I ſteer the courſe of my life aright, when I know not what port I would make? how ſhall my actions tend to any wiſe or noble purpoſe, when I have no mark prefix'd 'em? till then I muſt live *extempore*, and act at random, I muſt abandon myſelf to wind and tide, to time and chance.

Quo me cunque rapit tempeſtas, deferor hoſpes.
HORAT.

Toſt by a ſtorm, for my retreat I take
Whatever ſhore th' unguided bark can make.

In a word, till I have fix'd this notion, and know what to aim at, buſineſs will be but a mechanic drudging out of life, and ſtudy but a vain amuſement of my mind: whereas, when all the inclination of life and ſoul ſhall have one uniform bent and tendency; when every deſire of the ſoul, and every action of life, ſhall be a ſtep advancing in a direct line towards happineſs; when the vigour and activity of my mind ſhall not be ſuſpended and fruſtrated by incertainties and fluctuation, nor deluded and loſt in wandering errors and deviations, but ſhall ever carry me ſtraight forwards towards my journey's end; then certainly all my labours will

will thrive and prosper, and my progress will be great, tho' my motion should be but feeble and slow. Thus plants, whose native vigour mounts straight upwards, though their bulk be less, yet their height and beauty is greater than theirs whose luxuriant nourishment wastes itself in gouty knots and disordered branches.

Having considered this, I resolved, that I could not spend my time more manly and philosophically, than in an enquiry, what the happiness of man is, and how attainable: every advance towards this, is an accession to my life and being; and all travail, which doth not lead me on towards this end, is but so much of life mis-spent and lost: what a silliness were it to load my memory with terms and words, with numerous instances of matters of fact; to marshal up in order lines and figures; to talk of unknown seas and distant shores; to tumble over each page in nature's system? what trifling cunning to skill the gainful mysteries of trade? what solemn and laborious foppery to penetrate into all the subtilties of government, and arts of conversation? if after all, I have no receipt for a troubled mind, no cure for distempered passions: if I have no principle to support my mind under a sinking fortune, or govern it in a rising one; if I have nothing to arm me against my fears, or to disperse my griefs; would any one think I had spent my time well, or stocked myself with useful knowledge?

But to find out what would make me happier, to find out what would free my mind from the slavery of uneasy passions; what

would make it ſerene, ſteady, great and manly in all the accidents of life: this every man ſees at the firſt bluſh, to be a wiſe, generous, and ſerviceable employment of my reaſon. This,

Æquè pauperibus prodeſt, locupletibus æquè,
Æquè neglectum pueris ſenibuſque nocebit.

This learning rich and poor alike do need,
And its neglect do certain ruin breed,
To old and young alike.

This occaſion'd St. *Auſtin*'s ingenious reflection on the polytheiſm of the *Romans:* when he conſidered that they worſhipped *Felicitas* (by which they meant that Deity that could confer happineſs upon men) he could not but wonder, why this was not the moſt ancient of all their gods; or why when this deity was found out, they did not preſently diſcard the other idle multitude of ſuperfluous and unneceſſary gods, ſince this alone was ſufficient to ſupply all the neceſſities, and gratify all the deſires and appetites of mankind.

The neceſſity of this enquiry for the redreſs of human miſery.

But though happineſs ſhould be a project too great, too ambitious for a poor ſilly mortal; yet ſure the redreſs of thoſe evils which oppreſs our ſtate and nature, is ſuch an humble and modeſt deſign, as may well become the meanneſs of men; and therefore if I could not excuſe the confidence or preſumption of this enquiry, by pleading the innate deſire of

of happineſs; yet ſure I might, by urging the multitude of thoſe evils which infeſt human life, which 'tis not only irrational, but impoſſible, ſo far to yield and ſubmit to, as not to ſtruggle to free ourſelves from them, or endeavour to lighten their afflicting weight, or ſtudy to prevent them: this, I confeſs, was the firſt, and none of the leaſt prevalent arguments that engaged me: I love myſelf, and would be, if not happy, at leaſt not miſerable; and I am neither inſenſible, nor fearleſs: I know the common portion of man; and I cannot ſo far flatter myſelf as not to apprehend approaching evils: nor am I naturally ſo hard and tough, as not to ſhrink and gall under the weight of them: and I ſuppoſe moſt men are of the ſame nature with me, and as liable, as I am, to all the evils of time and chance; and conſequently this one conſideration of human miſery ought to work very powerfully in us, and effectually oblige us to this ſtudy.

Ariſtotle's definition of man, that he is a rational creature, is flat and heavy in compariſon to that of *Apuleius* the witty, though diſſolute *Platonic*.

* *Men, the inhabitants of earth, are endow'd with ſpeech and vaunt of reaſon; immortal are their ſouls, mortal their limbs, inconſtant and anxious their minds, brutiſh and obnoxious are their bodies; unlike are they in their manners, like in their errors; ſlurdy is their confidence, and*

* Homines ratione plaudentes, oratione pollentes, immortalibus animis, moribundis membris, levibus & anxiis mentibus, brutis & obnoxiis corporibus, diſſimilibus moribus, ſimilibus erroribus, pervicaci audaciâ, obſti-

pertinaci ſpe, caſſo labore fortunâ caducâ, volucri tempore, tardâ ſapientiâ citâ morte, querelâ vitâ terras incolunt. *Apul. de Deo Socr.*

obſtinate their hope; fruitleſs their toil, uncertain their fortune, ſwift their years, and ſlow their wiſdom, ſpeedy their death, and their life full of plaints.

Thus miſerable is our ſtate, and ſhall we now ſit down, and only childiſhly bewail ourſelves? ſhall we ſink under the weight of thoſe evils, by adding to them one heavier than them all, *deſpair?* Shall we think the thread of evils is ſo cloſely and fatally wove into one piece with the thread of life, that no wiſdom, no induſtry can prevent them? That no philoſophy (how divine ſoever) can divide or ſeparate the one from the other, and conſequently never think of any other than that one univerſal remedy of *Virgil, patience?*

——Fortuna omnis ſuperanda ferendo eſt:
Ah wretched nature! ah too helpleſs ſtate!
If nought but ſuff'ring can o'ercome our fate!

No, no! let others do what they will, I'll never thus abandon myſelf, I will not tamely and daſtardly renounce my hopes of happineſs; I'll ſtudy and contend for it whilſt I have a being; whatever calamities aſſault me, they ſhall find me ready arm'd from head to foot, nor ſhall they ever gain o'er me an eaſy victory; death itſelf, whenever it comes, ſhall find me ſtruggling to the laſt for life, eternal life and happineſs; nor can I entertain ſo unworthy a thought of the moſt perfect Being, but that he loves this reſolution where-

where-ever he meets it, and will be moſt ready to aſſiſt his creatures in ſo juſt and rational an endeavour.

CHAP. II.

Objections againſt this enquiry.

First, happineſs is too divine a ſtate for man to aſpire after.

Secondly, The utmoſt happineſs of this life is ſo trifling and inconſiderable, that it cannot recompenſe our time and travail.

Thirdly, There is no need of ſtudy or enquiry after Happineſs; nature and cuſtom being the bed guides to it.

Fourthly, The great variety there is in the nature of men, and conſequently in their happineſs, abundantly refutes all attempts of this nature, and demonſtrates it impoſſible either to frame one uniform notion of human happineſs, or preſcribe any conſtant and general rules for the attainment of it.

But as the *Iſraelites*, when they marched in arms to take poſſeſſion of the promiſed *land*, were told of the ſons of *Anak*, gigantic enemies, and cities walled and fenced up to heaven; ſo ſhall I, or any man that goes about to poſſeſs himſelf of ſo great a bleſſing as happineſs, be diſcouraged by worldly and ſenſual men, with the toil we are to undergo, with the difficulties we are to encounter, and generally with repreſentations of the folly and raſhneſs of the attempt? theſe muſt indeed be contemned and ſlighted, but it muſt be upon rational grounds;

and therefore I must consider their weight and strength before I proceed.

Object. 1. *Happiness too divine a state for man to aspire after.*

Various is the working of human fancy; they that will pretend to be acute and wise above the vulgar part of mankind (for such are always apt to despise speculation and learning) look upon happiness as too divine and glorious a state for so mean a creature as man to effect; it was not the only vain but sinful ambition of our first parents to aspire to the likeness of God, *Ye shall be as gods*, Gen. iii. and what can be more truly the prerogative and peculiar possession of God, than happiness, or what can make us more like God *? To affect this therefore were the folly of those earth-born creatures in the poet, which sacrilegiously invaded heaven: let us be content with the portion of man, and rest satisfied with those easy and obvious pleasures which best suit this imperfect nature and imperfect state.

I know not how well some may please themselves with this sort of talk; but this is plain to me, these men are contradictious to themselves, and their philosophy to all true reason; for notwithstanding this affected debasing of human nature, the transports of these voluptuaries are as bold and ambitious as those of the haughtiest *Stoick*; and 'tis no strange thing to hear an *Epicurean* boast of a parity or equality with his *Jupiter* in the point of happiness or pleasure. But to answer

* Omnis enim per se divûm natura necesse est,
Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
——— Privata dolore omni, privata periclis
Ipsa suis pollens opibus. *Lucr.*

anſwer the objection in a word: be the nature of mankind what it will, I do readily confeſs, that it were, if not a ſinful, yet a vain ambition for man to affect any other happineſs than what is ſuitable to his nature; for it were to purſue what he was not capable of; it were like the folly of *Semele* in the poet, when ſhe might be entertain'd by *Jupiter*, not only with the paſſion of a lover, but the glory and majeſty of a God; and ſo being fatally ſucceſsful in her wiſh, ſhe periſhed in the embraces ſhe had ſo proudly begged: this therefore we readily grant, happineſs is a ſtate of pleaſure, and pleaſure is the reſult of the proportion and agreeableneſs of the object to the capacity or appetite; ſo that he that aſpires to a ſtate of happineſs that infinitely exceeds his nature, fooliſhly doats on contradictions, and affects a happineſs devoid of pleaſure: or, which is all one, covets a pleaſure which he cannot enjoy. And thus this *Epicurean* objection vaniſhes into air and nothing.

As to that charge of ſacrilege and impious boldneſs, which is inſinuated in the objection againſt our ambition for happineſs, when it is remembered that we propoſe no happineſs, but what the make and frame of our nature qualifies and capacitates us for, and conſequently the God of nature deſigned for us; it will be eaſily granted, that God does not only allow of, but direct and delight in man's endeavours after happineſs: thoſe faculties and capacities with which he has endowed him, being the faireſt declaration of the divine will in this point.

There

There are others of that ſluggiſh and brutiſh temper, that being unable to raiſe their conception above ſenſe, or diſcover any charm in a rational and philoſophical pleaſure, they ſeem to deſpiſe that happineſs the wiſe and religious part of mankind profeſs to ſeek after: and to think all the pleaſure man can enjoy, ſo little, that it is ſcarce worth the while to take much pains for it.

Object. 2. *Happineſs here too trifling to require much toil.*

It is true, I am but a man, that is, a little atom in the vaſt matter, and my life is but a ſhort moment in an endleſs ſtream of time: but then I feel a ſtrange kind of comprehenſiveneſs in my ſoul, it ſtretcheth forth itſelf to times paſt and to come, it enjoys things that are not ſeen, by faith and hope, and ſometimes things that are not at all, by memory and fancy; and though my life is but a moment, ſatisfaction and pleaſure hath its degrees; and therefore if I can poſſeſs it in its height and perfection, I ſhall live much, though not long; I ſhall enjoy eternity in a moment, the world in a little globe. Nor is this a mere fancy and romance; for when I read St. *Auſtin*, ſo far inflamed with the love of true philoſophy by *Cicero*'s book *ad Hortenſium*, that he preſently abandons all the luſcious pleaſures of his pagan converſation, for the ſake of thoſe which he ſhould afterwards find in a philoſophical life: when I find *Cicero* in, ſurely, a holy raviſhment of ſoul, preferring *one day ſpent, according to the precepts of virtue, before a ſinful immortality*; and the Pſalmiſt, almoſt in the ſame words, as well as the ſame paſſion,

paſſion, *One day in thy courts is better than a thouſand*, Pſal. lxxxiv. I cannot chuſe but think there are irreſiſtible charms and beauties in virtue, and pleaſures in true philoſophy, as raviſhing as they are pure and ſacred: and who can reſtrain himſelf from the glowing deſires of, and reſolute endeavours after a ſhare in them? When I have read *Socrates* dying with a generous charity and ſerene hopes, and with an undiſturbed mind eaſily parting with all here below; when I have read of *Simeon* waiting for, and expecting death, as weary labourers do the evening ſhades, or as hirelings the reward of their work; when I read St. *Paul* with humble impatience expreſſing his devout deſire of death and diſſolution; when I have ſeen ſome (as ſome I have ſeen) ſitting in calm, and majeſty, and triumph, as if they had attended death as the old *Romans* once did the barbarous *Gauls*, in their chairs and robes; when I have ſeen men die, not only with content, but almoſt in an extaſy; and the ſoul breathed forth, not in a groan, but an ejaculation; I muſt needs ſay, I could not chuſe but wiſh with *Balaam*, Num. xxiii. *That I might die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end might be like his.* Theſe are degrees of happineſs, which I ſhould judge it reaſonable to purchaſe at any rate, whatever there be hereafter; a ſmooth, contented, delightful life, ſuch as would not only bear, but invite reflections on it; a chearful, lightſome death, able to make the living in love with it.

But

But after all, whether this preſent life be all my portion; whether I die all of me together with my body, or whether this life be only the time of our probation and preparation for another, and death be nothing but the rough paſſage from one ſhore to another, or the horizon that parts the hemiſphere of darkneſs from that of light, is a queſtion I will not now determine; it is ſufficient to propoſe it here as a doubt, whereof one ſide or other muſt be true. If therefore this life be in order to eternity, it nearly imports me to conſider my preſent relation to a future ſtate; if it be not, then this life, call it what you pleaſe, a ſpan, a dream, or a bubble, yet is it my *all*, and I muſt make the moſt of it. But,

Are not *nature* and *cuſtom* the beſt guides to happineſs? what needs there ſo much poring to find out that which inſtinct leads us to? we do not ſee that the moſt learned clerks are always the moſt happy men; let ſuch demonſtrate the truth of their philoſophy by their own ſucceſs: and thus they magnify nature, not out of any honour they deſign to do it, or the Author of it; but that they may with greater ſecurity contemn the one, and deprave the other by ſluggiſh luxury and unbridled luſt.

Object. 3. *There is no need of ſtudy or enquiry after happineſs, nature and cuſtom being the beſt guides to it.*

I am not eaſily tempted to a contempt of nature, or of cuſtoms; for by the one I ſhould ſeem injurious to God, who is the author of nature; and by the other I ſhould prove injurious to mankind, whoſe concurrent ſenſe and conſtant practice

tice creates a cuſtom. Therefore as to the former part of the objection, were it but once truly determined what were to be underſtood by *nature*, this objection would vaniſh. I think, our ſouls within us may be juſtly ſuppoſed to conſtitute a part of our nature, as well as our bodies; and therefore I cannot be content that the body, much leſs vicious habits, (commonly called indeed a ſecond nature) ſhould uſurp the name and authority of nature; nor conſequently can I be content to allow the mere ſenſual appetites of the body, much leſs the dictates of vicious habits, for the laws of nature. The body indeed is an eſſential part of our nature, but then it muſt be remembered, it is not the governing part; and therefore its inſtinct cannot arrogate to itſelf the authority of a law. It remains therefore, that though the rational ſoul within us be but a part of our nature, yet being the better part, the *ruling* part, its dictates muſt have the force of *laws*; ſo that the law of nature will be nothing elſe but the commands of right reaſon. I ſhall be moſt ready to grant, that we ought to follow the conduct of our nature, taking it in this ſenſe,

Beate vivit qui ſecundum eam partem animæ vivit, quam dominari in homini fas eſt: He indeed lives happily, who follows the conduct of that part to which belongs the undoubted right of ſovereignty and dominion in man. Aug. contra Academicos.

As to the latter part of this objection, which ſets up cuſtom, that it may exclude philoſophy: by *cuſtoms* is commonly meant thoſe principles and

and practices which are generally received and fashionable in the place we live. I have a just veneration for whatever is the sense of mankind; but I think their suffrage is not to be taken by number, but by weight: nor are we to follow the opinion or example of the most, but of the best: nor indeed is it possible to understand what is the sense of mankind in this point; for we have custom against custom, nation against nation, and religion against religion.

It ought further to be considered, that principles taken upon trust have seldom an equal influence upon us, with those which we take upon strict examination and mature deliberation; that men will easily be tempted to desert those, for which they have no better authority than the vote of a multitude: nor can any thing tend more to the disparagement of any persuasion than this, that it is not the result of our judgment, but our fortune; or to the dishonour of any religion than this, that it is magisterially obtruded by the authority of laws, and terror of force, and will not submit itself to the trial of sober philosophy; and so I take it to be a credit to the christian religion, that it did not force assent, but gain it by irresistible arguments; that is, so far from shunning the trial of impartial philosophy, that it did always invite men to a sober examination of its evidence; and commanded its disciples, *Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*, 1 Peter iii. 'Tis true indeed, as the case now stands, religion may, nay, must be recommended by authority of

law

law and cuſtom, and ingratiated by particular practice of it, but afterwards muſt grow up and be confirmed by reaſon, like a tender plant that is fixed by the help of another's hands, but afterwards it ſtands firmeſt upon its own roots: and this method our Saviour himſelf did ſometimes make uſe of, when either the ſtupidity of nature, or prejudice of education, rendered thoſe to whom he addreſſed his doctrine, incapable of entering into a thorough examination of it; *Then if any man will do my will, he ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*

Laſtly, To truſt to others, who themſelves with like raſhneſs and credulity do truſt to others in the matter of the higheſt moment of life, ſeems to me inconſiſtent with common prudence, with the very conſtitution of rational nature; for what uſe can be ſo much fancied of reaſon, if I ſlight its ſervice in ſo important an affair as this?

It is true, temper, fortune, and education, have, *de facto*, ſo great a ſhare in the happineſs or miſery of ſome kind of men eſpecially, that I muſt not yet diſmiſs this objection, till I have taken a little notice of ſuch for whoſe defence and ſervice it was at firſt found out: theſe are,

Firſt, The ſtupid and brutiſh part of mankind: theſe ſeem to have met with happineſs whilſt they ſeek it not; their fancies flat, their proſpect ſhort, and their deſires few and eaſy; and conſequently if their pleaſures be not rais'd, neither are their troubles deep; time and chance happen to 'em, and they bear the one, and wear out

out the other without any very melancholy or tender reſentments; ſtupidity in them out-does all the habits of philoſophy in others; and want of ſenſe makes them laugh more loudly, live more ſecurely, and die more unconcernedly than the acuteſt and thoughtfulleſt of men can.

Were the incapacity of theſe men great enough to juſtify their contempt of reaſon and religion, I ſhould almoſt be tempted to call them happy; but at the ſame moment I ſhould deſpiſe their happineſs*; for I cannot call thoſe happy, whatever their enjoyments be, whoſe ſouls are too ſluggiſh and drowſy to underſtand or reflect upon their happineſs: or, if I muſt call this happineſs, 'tis the happineſs of a beaſt, not of a man: with me to live, is ſomewhat greater than to feed and reſt; and to be happy, muſt be much more than to live. The extreme to theſe are,

* Non idea tamen quiſquam felicia dixerit, quibus non eſt felicitatis intellectus. *Sen. de Vit. beat.*

Secondly, The gay, the gaudy, the modiſh, the unthinking part of mankind: theſe in their own opinion, and truly in the opinion of the world (moſt men being either flatterers or enviers of their good luck) may pretend to happineſs; and if their pretence be well founded, their way to happineſs is a more ready, plain, and compendious one, than any that ever was, or ever will be diſcovered.

But alas, ſhortneſs of ſight cannot paſs with me for wit, nor an unthinking confidence for wiſdom: I have ſeen moſt of thoſe dreams the world can preſent the gayeſt fancy with; and upon

upon the utmoſt of my trial, I have perhaps found ſomething that would divert my fancy, nothing that could ſatisfy a rational ſoul. I will not here examine what is the employment, what the pleaſure proper to a rational being; nor will I now go about to ſhew, that that mind can enjoy no ſober or laſting peace, much leſs pleaſure, which is engaged in ſuch a method of life as it cannot give a good account of, or rationally juſtify to itſelf; both which conſiderations would be plain refutations of this gay objection: 'tis enough in this place to ſay, that this ſort of life is repugnant to thoſe principles which religion reveals, which reaſon ſeems ready to embrace, and which are back'd by all the authority which the unanimous approbation of the wiſeſt and beſt part of mankind can give 'em. It behoves us therefore not to abandon ourſelves to this kind of life, till we have narrowly diſcuſs'd and try'd theſe principles; for if they ſhould prove true, then will this ſenſual, careleſs life, betray us to a miſerable eternity: and tho' they ſhould be falſe, yet till we are upon rational grounds convinc'd that they are ſo, we have little reaſon to commit our happineſs to ſo great a hazard, where the odds are very great againſt us, that we are in the wrong.

It remains, notwithſtanding all theſe objections, that it behoves every man to purſue his happineſs by a rational enquiry after it, neither under-valuing human nature or its happineſs, nor giving up himſelf to the guidance of the brutiſh and blind part of him; but ſeriouſly and thoroughly to examine whatever end be pro-

pos'd to him as his happineſs, or whatever method be propos'd to him as the way to it: but when we have blown off theſe not formidable objections againſt this enquiry, but looſe and wanton excuſes of the neglect of it, there are others yet that ſeem by a fairer ſhew of reaſon to deter us from it by the difficulty and unſucceſsfulneſs of the attempt.

Object. 4. *The great variety there is in men, and conſequently his happineſs, explodes theſe attempts.*

Happineſs (ſay they) is like *Proteus* in the poet, it puts on ſo many different forms and ſhapes, that it ſeems impoſſible to circumſcribe it within general rules, or to repreſent it under any one fixt, definite and ſingle notion or idea; and it deſerves well to be examin'd, what weight or truth there is in the vulgar notion of happineſs, that for a man to be happy, is nothing elſe but to live according to his fancy: and it ſeems no leſs abſurd to invite every man to the ſame heaven, or gratify every humour by the ſame kind of happineſs, than to entertain all appetites with one and the ſame diſh.

But as in that great variety of complexion, feature, ſhape, and motion, and in that great diverſity of capacities and endowments which we behold in men, there is yet one common nature wherein they all agree, whereby they are conſtituted creatures of the ſame ſpecies; juſt ſuch accidental varieties may the happineſs of man be capable of, and yet the life and being, the ſoul and ſubſtance of it, may be one and the ſame, and conſequently may be comprehended under

under general rules. And if this anſwer were not ſufficient, it would not be abſurd to ſay, that happineſs, like beauty, may put on various dreſſes, and yet be ſtill charming and delightful in each; or that this bread, like that of heaven (for ſo the *Rabbins* tells us of *Manna*) has that in it which gratifies every palate; there are ſovereign and unallay'd bleſſings, ſuch as *life*, *perfection*, *indolence*, &c. which take with every appetite, and are univerſally welcom'd to all the ſons of men. Or, I may truly ſay, that happineſs muſt not only be prepared and fitted for man, but man for his happineſs; he muſt become a rational creature ere he can enjoy a rational pleaſure: 'tis from this want of preparation that diverſity of opinions concerning happineſs ſprings, which is ſo univerſal a diſcouragement. For,

It cannot be denied, but that the opinions of men concerning happineſs have been and are extremely various: all the different ſects of philoſophy and religion being ſo many different paths, which the different apprehenſions of the minds of men have mark'd out to happineſs. I have no undervaluing thoughts of the abilities of mankind, or overweening opinion of my own; I cannot think myſelf clearer ſighted, nor can I promiſe that I ſhall be more fortunate or more induſtrious in my ſearch, than others: this is my comfort, that my miſcarrying in this attempt is more honourable, than ſucceſs in a trifling and impertinent one——

——*Magnis tamen excidit auſis.*

Nor can I think that uncertainty, which this diverſity of opinions ſeems to imply, ſufficient to deter any wiſe man's enquiry. No ſick man in his wits will renounce the deſires or hopes of a cure, becauſe phyſicians differ in their opinions about the method of it: the ſtudy of philoſophy has never been utterly forſaken, tho' that of one age baffle and overthrow that of another; and this ſtands rather upon the weakneſs and obſcurity of the former, than its own ſtrength or evidence. The *academics* do not ſeem to have entertain'd ſo groſs an abſurdity as ſome have fancy'd, when they taught that wiſdom conſiſted in the ſearch of truth, even at the ſame time when they believ'd that it could not be fully found out: for where certainty cannot be had, it is not unreaſonable to follow the faireſt probabilities. And if this were rationally practiſed in any ſtudy, certainly much more in that of happineſs; ſince the neceſſity of this ſtudy above any other, doth more indiſpenſibly oblige us to it: for all labour and learning that promotes not the great end of happineſs is to no purpoſe, ſince we are ne'er the better for't; for to be the better, and to be the happier for't, is all one.

But there is no reaſon why we ſhould take up with theſe cold and lifeleſs anſwers, which will ſatisfy none, but thoſe who are extremely well inclin'd: we may now boldly ſay, the difficulties that former ages met with are of no force now to deter us; we can now free ourſelves from the diſtracting terrors of an inviſible Power, without baniſhing him out of that world which himſelf

himſelf created; we can now prove a judgment to come without the aſſiſtance of poetic dreams, and the exiſtence of ſouls after death, without their pre-exiſtence before our birth: to be ſhort, we have now revelation for our rule, and every good man a divine Spirit for his guide; nay, every man, (if he be ſincere) in ſuch enquiries as theſe. *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him*, James i. So that now we may very rationally conclude, that fatal ignorance or fatal error in this point muſt be imputed either to a lazy and ſottiſh contempt of that knowledge we are moſt nearly concerned in, and the means conducing to it, or to an obſtinate reſiſtance of that conviction which God endeavours to beget in us by his word and his Spirit, or at leaſt to the want of that juſt conſideration we ought to allow to reveal'd truths, or of that neceſſary preparation which fits us for divine aſſiſtance, and enables us to underſtand the divine will; and for this reaſon the diſſentions and ſharp contentions of Chriſtians, ought to be no prejudice to the authority or perſpicuity of revelation, or to the aſſertion of the Spirit's conduct and aſſiſtance: for, beſides that unity of faith is an unity of fundamentals, not of fancies; it muſt be confeſs'd, that our ſects and diviſions have their riſe and propagation from theſe and ſuch like cauſes; nothing being more common than that mens tempers, and complexions, and educations, and intereſts, and paſſions ſhould give a bias to their judgments, and a tincture to their tenets and opinions:

it is eaſy to ſee, that the errors of ſome are the dreams of a drowſy careleſsneſs; of others, the wanderings of a wanton confidence; of others, the crooked windings of deſigning intereſt, and ſo on: for it may with much truth be affirm'd, that all erroneous philoſophy in matters neceſſary and fundamental, is the reſult of ſome unworthy luſt and paſſion: but all theſe matters, namely, the uſe of revelation and God's Spirit, the vanity of all objections form'd againſt religion, diſſenſions about it, the difficulties the heathens were to encounter in their enquiries after happineſs, *&c.* ſhall be more fully treated of in their proper places.

Thus, I think, I have in this ſection, *Firſt*, ſufficiently evinced the importance and neceſſity of an enquiry after happineſs, ſince 'tis impoſſible to ſteer the courſe of life aright, without a clear knowledge of that which ought to be the end, the center of all our deſires and endeavours, that is, *happineſs:* without this, 'tis not only impoſſible to be happy, but, what ought ſeriouſly to be weighed, impoſſible not to be miſerable. *Secondly*, I have cleared this undertaking from thoſe objections with which it is generally aſſaulted. Let us not therefore ſo far diſparage and undervalue human nature, or diſhonour the Author of it, as ever once to fancy that happineſs is too great for us, or we too little for it; or that God ſhould diſallow, as a ſacrilegious ambition, the moſt rational attempts of a rational creature, I mean thoſe of becoming happy; ſince we ſeek no other happineſs than what the make and frame of nature, and conſequently the God of nature,

nature, appears plainly to capacitate us for, and design us to, the greatness of which nothing can so well express, as the transports and raptures of happy men.

But let us not think this happiness so easy a purchase, that it will run into the lap of the sluggish, or prostitute itself to the embrace of senseless brutish lust. No, no; nothing but industrious reason, pure and vigorous philosophy, can ever attain it: the sluggard or the wanton, the fool and vain, may have some fits of mirth; only the rational, only the philosopher, can possess true and lasting happiness: nor let the endless quarrels, the numerous contentions of vain and proud pretenders, discourage from following the conduct of reason and revelation; these are the contentions of lust, not philosophy. Truth and happiness (as some have lately fancy'd of love) inhabit a palace, into which none can enter but humble, sincere, and constant lovers.

SECT. II.

Of the attainableneſs or poſſibility of happineſs in this life.

CHAP. I.

The notion of happineſs ſtated; granted imperfect, compared to that of another life, yet in itſelf conſiderable and deſirable.

HAving removed ſuch diſcouragements as were leſs conſiderable, I come now to examine that which attacks my deſign with the rudeſt violence, and undermines the very foundation of it: I mean the *impoſſibility* of obtaining happineſs in this world. 'Tis true, if our endeavours after happineſs here could ſucceed no further than to ſecure it to us hereafter, none could deny them reaſonable upon this ſole account: yet, becauſe thi perſuaſion would blunt the force of one of the moſt powerful motives to religion, which is, *That its ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all its paths are peace*, and conſequently very much abate our vigilance and induſtry in purſuit of it; I judge it indiſpenſibly neceſſary to enter into a full diſcuſſion of this point. In managing which, I will, *Firſt*, Aſſert the poſſibility of obtaining happineſs, by plain, and, as I think, unanſwerable arguments; and then, *2dly*, I will endeavour to

to give full ſatisfaction to all objections to the contrary. But, before I do either of theſe, as well for order and inſtruction ſake, as to obviate miſtakes, I think 'tis fit I ſhould explain my notion of the happineſs I propoſe: I muſt therefore acquaint my reader, that I do not promiſe him a heaven upon earth; that I do not promiſe him the happineſs of angels, but of men; and that I do not underſtand happineſs in this propoſition of that which is every way perfect and abſolute, to which fancy itſelf can add nothing; but of that which is, like our nature, incompleat and imperfect, ſpeaking comparatively, and yet truly great and excellent in itſelf too. *Seneca* doth ſomewhere deſcribe this happy man much after this manner: "He "is one who deſpiſes all thoſe things which are "ſubject to change; who accounts nothing "good or bad, but virtue and vice; who is not "puffed up by proſperous events, or caſt down "by adverſe ones; one whoſe great pleaſure is "to deſpiſe pleaſure; one above either deſire or "fear, content with the riches which are the "true and proper poſſeſſion of virtue, and co-"veting nothing more: ſuch a one, he thinks, "cannot chuſe but be happy." And I think ſo too; and, I fear, a great deal happier than any man on earth can ever be. This is a gay dream, but well ſuiting that philoſophy which requires the tranquillity, and ſteadineſs or conſtancy, of God to be joined with the frailty of man; a compoſition of things infinitely more incompatible than that of an immortal ſoul and mortal body

The happineſs of this life granted imperfect.

can be fancy'd to be. For my part, I am content to call a building beautiful, tho' there be ſomething in it which doth not anſwer the teſt of the ſtricteſt art, or at leaſt of the moſt accurate fancy: I am content to call it day, tho' flitting clouds and ſhowers do now and then a little obſcure the light; ſo can I not chuſe but call him righteous, who is ſincere, though not perfect; whoſe life is, generally ſpeaking, bright and exemplary, though not utterly void of ſpots and blemiſhes; whoſe motion is a progreſs towards virtue, though it be ſometimes retarded, nay, ſometimes interrupted: and ſo I am content to think him a happy man, not who is utterly exempt from all diſturbances in mind or body; not who lives in conſtant extaſy; but him whoſe pleaſures are more and greater than his troubles, whoſe hopes are more and greater than his fears; one whoſe enjoyments, though they do not tranſport, do ſatisfy him; one whoſe ſerenity and calm of mind, though it may ſuffer interruptions, ſuffers but few and ſlight ones. I will intreat the reader to admit of this notion of happineſs here, till we gradually advance to a clear and full diſcovery of it. Now, as we are not to lay aſide any advice of being virtuous, becauſe we cannot arrive at the height and conſtancy of holy angels; ſo neither are we to caſt off all thoughts of happineſs, becauſe we cannot equal theirs: for if we are happy in ſuch a degree as the imperfection of our nature and this inferior ſtate will permit; if we can free ourſelves from thoſe miſeries which do involve the fooliſh and vicious part of mankind;

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if we can poſſeſs ourſelves of thoſe humble and modeſt joys that human nature is here capable of, it will be worth all the time and travail we can ſpend upon the deſign; and, that we may advance thus far, the following conſiderations will, I think, render it more than probable.

The poſſibility, &c. proved.

CHAP. II.

The poſſibility of attaining happineſs, aſſerted.

1. *Some happier than others, and this owing to their virtue.* 2. *Good and evil in the world.* Obj. *Evils more than goods, anſwered, by aſſerting the contrary. From the ſuffrage of the good. The make of the world. The nature of man. Scripture. The confeſſion of Atheiſts and* Epicureans. Obj. 2. *Evil more efficacious than good, anſwered. What impreſſions evils ought to make on man, examined. Natural evils, ſlight, unleſs ſharpened by ourſelves. Moral evils avoidable. What impreſſions evils actually have, examined. Man proved naturally furniſhed with inclinations and arts that magnify good, and leſſen evil.* Obj. 3. *Good and evil not dependant of man, anſwered, by conſidering the nature of wiſdom and folly. A recapitulation of the arguments of this chapter.*

Firſt, It cannot be denied but that ſome men are more happy, or at leaſt more miſerable, than

Becauſe ſome are more happy than others.

than others; who will deny *Titus* to have been infinitely more happy than *Nero? Titus*, whoſe government of the *Roman* people was not more mild and gentle than the impartial reflections of his conſcience upon himſelf and actions, if we credit *Suetonius (in vita Titi)* in his relation of his death? *Nero*, that guilty wretch, whoſe conſcience was no leſs a plague to him than he to *Rome?* Who prefers not the character of *Mitio* in the comedian, before that of *Demea?* (Terent.) *Mitio*, whoſe ſmooth and kind, as well as prudent behaviour, rendered him eaſy and amiable to his family and relations, and made the fortune of his whole life flow calmly and gently to the end? *Demea*, whoſe ſour, ſuſpicious and ſevere behaviour did exaſperate and ruffle the minds of all that related to him, and did diſturb and muddy that ſtream of his affairs, which would otherwiſe have run ſmooth and clear? Who will compare the pleaſant retirements, the modeſt contentments, the regular and virtuous enjoyments of *Atticus*, with the turbulent popularity of *Gracchus*, or the fatal luxuries of *Catiline*, or the proud cruelties of *Sylla* and *Marius?* What then? Shall we attribute no ſhare of happineſs or miſery to the virtues or vices of the one or the other? or no part of their virtues or vices to themſelves, but to (I know not what) fatal and irreſiſtible cauſes? If we aſſert the former, with frontleſs confidence we contradict unqueſtionable matters of fact; if the latter, we rob the virtuous of that merit which render'd 'em belov'd

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in their lives, and ever ſince has preſerv'd their memories ſacred and honourable; and we acquit thoſe from all blame and guilt, which the laws of their own country, and the common ſenſe of all mankind have ever condemn'd and deteſted. What groſs and monſtrous abſurdities are theſe? Shall we now, after the improvement of ſo many ages, (for we pretend to grow more wiſe and learned daily) diſpute whether vice or virtue be the better guide of human actions, or the more ſerviceable to human life? Shall ſloth and luxury be thought to conduce as much to the proſperity and decency of our lives, as induſtry and frugal temperance? Shall ambition, pride and choler, be now judg'd as inſtrumental to promote and preſerve the peace and repoſe of our minds and ſtates, as modeſty, meekneſs, and charity? Or if this be too daring a defiance to ſenſe and experienc, ſhall we contend that the ſlothful and luxurious, the unjuſt and cruel, are as blameleſs and innocent; nay, if we extend the principles to their juſt conſequence, as commendable and worthy of praiſe as the induſtrious and temperate, the meek and gentle, the juſt and charitable? For this muſt inevitably follow, if neither mens virtues nor vices be in any degree to be aſcribed to themſelves. Wretched and deſperate is that ſhift that equals the juſt and unjuſt, the induſtrious and ſluggard, the great mind that ſtands upright under and outbraves misfortune, and the dangerous one which effeminately ſhrinks and breaks under it! Wretched the ſhift that equals the tyrant and moſt gracious prince, the loyaliſt ſubject and the

the traitor, the faithful friend and perfidious flatterer; and all this we muſt be driven to, or elſe, as we cannot deny that ſome are happier than others, ſo we muſt not deny that the happineſs of the one, or the miſery of the other, is owing, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, to their virtues and vices, and theſe to themſelves. And if this be true, 'tis evident we may be happy if we will; and tho' we may not equal the moſt happy (for I will not exclude temper, education, fortune, from all ſhare in mens miſery or happineſs) yet ſince every degree of happineſs is truly valuable, let us with all our might endeavour to be as happy as we can.

Nec quia deſperes invicti membra Glyconis,
Nodoſa corpus noli prohibere Chiragra:
Eſt quiddam prodire tenus—— HOR.
The mighty Glyco's *ſtrength you can't attain;*
Don't therefore ſcorn to free your limbs from pain
Of knotty gout: eaſe, tho' not ſtrength to gain,
Is no ſmall happineſs——

But to purſue our proof:

Becauſe there is good and evil in the world.

2. It is a great abſurdity to confound or equal virtue and vice; but 'tis not the greateſt they commit who deny the poſſibility of attaining happineſs: for he, who baniſhes happineſs out of the world, does at the ſame time baniſh good and evil out of it too: for good being nothing elſe but the ſubſerviency of ſome things to our true intereſt and pleaſure, and evil the tendency of others

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to our trouble and injury; it muſt needs follow, if there be good and evil in the world, that he, who has a greater ſhare of good than evil, is a happy man; and he, that denies good and evil, may with as plauſible a confidence deny all human paſſions, and aſſert that there is neither love nor hatred, neither joy nor grief, nor hope, nor fear, nor pity, nor envy: for good or evil are the objects or cauſes of all theſe. I may then, I think, take it for granted, that no man will take the confidence to ſay, that there is no ſuch thing as good and evil in the world; and and conſequently all men muſt be obliged to acknowledge ſuch a ſtate as happineſs in the world too, unleſs they will affirm one of theſe three things; either firſt, that evil grows up every where in thick crops; good, thin, ſcatter'd, and rarely to be found, eſpecially grown up to its maturity; that, conſequently, there are none whoſe ſhare of evil doth not infinitely outweigh that of good. Or, Secondly, That evil hath ſo much of venom and malignity in it, that a little evil contributes more to our miſery, than a great deal of good can to our happineſs; ſo ripe and full-grown is evil; ſo lank, under-grown, and every way imperfect is good in this world. Or, Thirdly, That we ourſelves can contribute nothing to that good or evil which is our portion; 'tis the product, not of reaſon or induſtry, but of time and chance, or of ſome other principle which is not in our power. All theſe deſerve to be weighed, not only becauſe the examination of them will tend to chear and encourage the

minds

minds of men, and to render the great Creator and Governor of the world more dear and venerable to us; but alſo, becauſe it will be of ſome uſe and ſervice to the whole enquiry.

1. Evils not more than goods in the world. From the ſuffrage of the god.

Firſt, Therefore let us examine what truth there is in that fancy which ſuppoſes the weight and number of the evils in the world infinitely to exceed that of good things. I know there are a ſort of ſour and murmuring, of proud and ambitious wretches, who deal with their God as with their prince or patron; and eſtimate favours and benefits, not according to their merit, but expectation, greedy and haughty expectation which even prodigal bounty cannot ſatisfy: 'tis the ſtrange temper of ſome men that they wither and grow lean with diſcontent and envy; even whilſt their ſtudied meals diſtract the wanton appetite, and their very attendants are ſleek and full, and fat with the remains of their feaſt; and the meaneſt of their relations thrive into pride and inſolence by the mere ſprinklings of their plenty. I know 'tis natural to ſome to blaſpheme God and the King, to quarrel with and reproach providence and their government; while loaded with good things, they ſtretch themſelves on ſilken couches, under roofs of cedar, and loll at eaſe in their gilt coaches; and yet at the ſame time the honeſt countryman, who with ſecurity, though much drudgery, ploughs and ſows, and reaps a few acres, eats his plain meals with chearfulneſs, ſleeps without

without disturbance, blesses God, and magnifies the goodness of his prince. The contentment of one is an evident proof of God's bounty and goodness; whose provision doth far exceed the necessities of his creatures: the discontent of the other can be no disparagement to it, since he has dealt extremely liberally with 'em, tho' they enjoy not what they possess. We are not therefore to judge of the world by the clamours and invectives of such as are always mutinous and dissatisfied, but by the suffrages of those most humble, modest, and grateful souls, who know how to value the favours of heaven and themselves as they ought to do; who do not mar and corrupt every blessing by peevishness, or envy, or pride, or wantonness; but can weigh their enjoyments, their hopes and their merits, in just and equal balances; and discerning how much the one does exceed the other, chearfully adore and praise the world's Author and Governor. If this controversy were to be determin'd by such, we should find these even under uneasy and tyrannical governments, and in the more barren and niggardly countries, confuting this objection by their chearfulness and contentment: what would they have done, if providence had planted 'em there where a fertile soil and thriving trade had unladed the wealth and plenty of the world into their arms, and a mild and gentle government had secured and guarded their enjoyments?

But let us decide the controversy, not by votes, but reasons; let us consider the state and nature of the world; *From the ends of the world.*

is there one in a thouſand who is left utterly unfurniſh'd of all means of wiſe and wholſome inſtruction, which is the good of the ſoul of man? or is there one in a thouſand maim'd and defective in the powers and faculties of the ſoul, or ſenſes and members of the body? Is there one in a thouſand born under ſo unlucky and envious planets, that he cannot by any induſtry or virtue provide himſelf a comfortable ſubſiſtance? View and ſurvey the world; examine and conſider man, and tell me whether there be any room for thoſe reproaches, and ſpiteful reflections, by which ſome men have ſo outrag'd nature and providence? *Philo Judæus (de plantatione Noe)* tells us a rabbinical ſtory to this purpoſe, that when God had created the world, he demanded of a prophet, whether he ſaw any thing wanting to conſummate and compleat the glorious work? Who told him *nothing* but an intelligent being to praiſe the wiſe and gracious architect. The *Hebrew* philoſophers (it ſeems) thought the world exactly perfect; ſuch a work as might beſpeak God the Author of it: and no wonder, for they were inſpir'd by *Moſes*, who brings in God reflecting upon his own creation, thus: *And God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* How unlike is all this to the *Epicurean* philoſophy, whoſe great patron *Lucretius* endeavours to infer, from the ill contrivance, the manifold defects, the innumerable evils of the world, that God could not be the creator of it! That ever the work by which God deſign'd to exalt his glory, ſhould be drawn into an occaſion of diſ-

honouring

honouring and reproaching him! That ever that work which deſerv'd the praiſes of men and angels, ſhould at laſt ſtand in need of apologies and defences! If we look up to the heavens, ſuch is the beauty of thoſe bodies, ſo uniform and regular their motions, ſo exactly are they diſpos'd both for ornament and ſervice, that the ſpeculation naturally exalts the mind, and inſenſibly raiſes it above the body: nay, it has tempted ſome to think every ſtar mov'd and acted by ſome underſtanding ſpirit. If we look upon the earth, ſo wonderful is the variety, ſo inconceivable the wealth and plenty of it, that it is not only ſufficient for the needs and deſires of the ſober and temperate, but even for the luxury and wantonneſs of the fanciful and intemperate: every place almoſt is a paradiſe; there is no country almoſt which cannot afford us *Tempe* or *Campania*, *opus gaudentis naturæ*, a work which nature ſeems to have created when in the gayeſt and the kindeſt humour. If there were room for fancy in ſacred things, one would almoſt think that *Moſes*, out of ignorance of other countries, or love of his own, had confin'd *Eden* within thoſe narrow bounds he ſets it; and that it had only been loſt there, becauſe a fuller diſcovery of the world had now found it almoſt every where: this is the world we complain of.

Let us now conſider man, and we ſhall find with the Pſalmiſt, *That he is wonderfully made; he is but little lower than the angels; he is crowned with glory and honour, and all*

From the nature of man.

the creatures are put under his feet, all the fowls of the air, and all the beasts of the field, Psal. viii. and cxxix. How infinitely wise, as well as kind, does God appear in his contrivance? So modest are his appetites, that a small portion of nature's good, is a full meal or feast; and yet so various, that there is nothing in all the provision, in all the joys and luxuries of nature, which he is not capable of tasting and enjoying. If we regard the mind of man, 'tis capable of a most surprising satisfaction in the contemplation of the hidden powers, the secret laws and operations of nature; nay, it rises higher, it passes the bounds of mechanic nature, it entertains itself with moral perfections, and the spiritual excellencies of an invisible world, and gazes on those charms and glories which are not subject to the bodily eye: *vultus nimis lubricos aspici:* such is the nature of the soul, that when it pleases it can retire within itself, withdraw from sense, and be secure and happy in its own strength and wealth, *ipsa suis pollens opibus:* and when it pleases it can walk forth like *Dinah,* to see the daughters of the land, those beauties that sense presents it with; and that too (if guarded by awful virtue) without the danger of a rape. To say all of it in a word, 'tis capable of a share in all the good, and not necessarily subject to any of the evil of this world.

——*Fatis avolsa voluntas.*

There are no fates that can controul
The sovereign freedom of the soul.

If

If this be a true account of man, and the ſtate of the world which he inhabits; if the one be fill'd with all things neceſſary and delightful, and the other be endowed with all thoſe capacities and appetites that fits him to enjoy 'em: nay, if his ſoul can raiſe itſelf above the pleaſures, and exempt itſelf from the changes and revolutions of it; nothing is more manifeſt, than that the evil in life cannot be greater than the good, unleſs it be owing to ourſelves.

From ſcripture.

And to leave this matter beyond diſpute, no man pretending to receive revelation, ſhould admit of the contrary opinion: for no texts of divine writ are more plain, than thoſe which proclaim to us God's love of mankind; *That he doth not afflict or grieve willingly the children of men:* that the book of creation and providence is writ all over with the legible characters of love; ſo legible, that it renders the idolatry and wickedneſs of the *Gentiles* inexcuſable: and finally, That *he gives us richly all things to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. where the apoſtle excellently expreſſes at once the bounty and deſign of God: his bounty, in that he gives us all things *richly*; his deſign, not to enkindle, and then delude our deſires, like the *tree of life or knowledge*, made only to be forbidden us, but on purpoſe to be enjoy'd by us. So then the Chriſtian cannot believe the evils to outweigh the goods of life, without contradicting revelation; nor the Atheiſt or *Epicurean*, as ſhall appear from what follows, without contradicting himſelf.

If nature has contriv'd the world ſo ill, if it has ſcatter'd good things with ſuch a ſparing and envious hand, whence are all thoſe tranſports and extaſies we meet with amongſt theſe men? What is the ground? What is the matter of them? Whence ſo rich a crop of worldly ſenſual pleaſures? Whence ſo much dotage on, and fondeſs for the world we ſo much complain of? Whence are the charms and irreſiſtible temptations which the generality of mankind is vanquiſhed by? Whence is it that men are ſo willing to ſet up their reſt on this ſide *Canaan*? Whence that dread and averſion for death, as the moſt formidable evil?

From the confeſſion of Atheiſts and Epicureans.

Again, if nature has been ſuch a ſtep-mother to man, if it has frowardly and peeviſhly deſigned him little elſe but miſchief: whence that ſagacity and penetration of mind, ſearching with delight into all the retirements of nature? Whence that comprehenſive and almoſt immenſe capacity of pleaſure? Whence that ſtrength and greatneſs of ſoul enabling not only to confront, but to deſpiſe evils, and to be happy in deſpite of them? Theſe are advantages ſo incomparably great and good, that no evils can be balanced againſt them: and 'tis evident that no writings, no, not of the *Stoicks* themſelves, were ever more ſtuffed with boaſting and daring accounts of the nature of man, than thoſe of the *Epicureans*. And thus, from all put together, whether we conſult the nature and ſtate of the world and man, the teſtimony of revelation or

reaſon, the ſuffrage of the good-humour'd and grateful part of mankind, or the confeſſions of the voluptuous and atheiſtical, 'tis evident the good does outweigh evil in the deſign of God or nature. But have I not myſelf, in the beginning of this treatiſe, acknowledg'd the weight and number of *evils* great? Yes, but *evils* not of God's creation, but our own: for the truth of the whole is, ταράσσει τὺς ἀνθρώπυς ὐ τὰ πράγματα ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων δόγματα. Not things themſelves, but the ſhades and fantaſms, wanton, ſuperſtitious, effeminate or froward minds do raiſe about 'em, diſturb the quiet and repoſe of man. So then, if we ourſelves do not multiply the number of our evils, our ſhare of good in life may be much greater than our ſhare of evil; and if we be not acceſſary to our own miſery, we may be happy; unleſs,

Secondly, Evil hath ſo much venom and malignity in it, that a little evil contributes more to our miſery than a great deal of good can to our happineſs. We may judge of the force and energy of good and evil, either by that influence they generally *have*, or they *ought* to *have* upon the ſtate of mankind. If we conſider what impreſſion they *ought* to make upon men, the queſtion will come to a ſpeedy and a happy iſſue; for then we muſt either reckon nothing an evil but a moral one, that is, ſin and vice; or at leaſt we muſt acknowledge that the venom of other evils is not comparable to that of moral ones. This latter opinion is an unqueſtionable truth:

2. The efficacy of evil not greater than that of good. Natural evils contemptible to the virtuous. Moral ones avoidable.

truth: for who will not make a wide difference between a misfortune and a crime, between an affliction and a punishment, between those inconveniencies, trouble, and pain which we suffer as guilty criminals, and those we suffer as unfortunate innocents, or afflicted heroes or saints? For notwithstanding the evils or pains should be, in the matter of 'em, the same, yet there is a vast difference in the suffering; the one makes man much more miserable than the other; for our misfortunes only reach the body, not the mind: but when we suffer for our crimes, the whole man suffers, the soul as well as the body. Misfortunes, when the storm is o'erpass'd, leave no deform'd ruins, no wounds, no scars behind 'em; but our crimes leave stains and guilt behind, which haunt the mind with perpetual horror. From this distinction of the nature and effects of evils, we may infer this comfortable conclusion, that nothing can make man *wholly, truly* miserable, but himself; nothing can oppress him by the weight of moral evils but his own choice; for nothing can compel or necessitate him to be wicked: the strokes, the wounds of natural evils (so I will call all the rest distinct from moral, and owing their being to the revolutions of time, and chance, and nature) are faint and slight; the mind of man ought not to suffer itself to be too deeply and sensibly affected by them. It is the work of reason and religion to fortify the mind against the impressions of these evils: and truly that mind that is furnish'd with true notions of things, with a rational and solid faith, with steady and well-

grounded

grounded hopes, may bear the impetuous ſhock of all theſe waves and ſtorms calm and unmov'd: nay, I may boldly affirm, not only that virtue checks and controuls theſe evils, blunts their edge, and abates their force; but, what is more, that their natural ſtrength, their own proper force is weak and contemptible, unleſs our own vice be combined and confederated with them againſt us. Our pride muſt aid our enemy to render his affront provoking; our covetouſneſs and ambition muſt aſſiſt fortune, to render its contempt or hatred of us deſtructive to the tranquillity of our ſtate. Falſhood, under a diſguiſe of friendſhip, could never have abus'd our confidence, by betraying our infirmities, or for forſaking us in affliction, had not our own folly and ſelf-conceit firſt betrayed us, expoſing us a naked prey to flattery and treachery. The coldneſs or neglect of great men could never wound us, the hollow deceitful profeſſions of thoſe above us, could never fool or fret us, did not the fondneſs of our own deſires betray us firſt into vain preſumption, and a flattering credulity. The ſtorm that ſnatcheth away a relation or a friend, could never overthrow me, if I ſtood upon my own bottom, if I were not guilty of one of the greateſt weakneſſes, of placing my happineſs in any thing out of my own power, and ſo making myſelf dependant upon another man's fancy or fortune. Finally, Death itſelf muſt derive its terrors from the mournful ſolemnities we dreſs it in, from the darkneſs and horrors of our deluded imaginations; or elſe it would prove but a contemptible

temptible bugbear, a very inconſiderable evil, or *none at all.* Thus 'tis evident, that if we diſtinguiſh evils into natural and moral, we ſhall have little reaſon to think the influence of evil ſo malignant and deadly, ſince 'tis in our own power to avoid moral evils; and natural ones ſtrike but half way; they wound not the ſoul that is armed and guarded with reaſon and religion.

But now, if, with the *Stoicks*, we ſhould admit of no other ſort of evil, but what is moral; if we ſhould allow the name of good to nothing but virtue, or of evil to nothing but vice; then we muſt look upon temporal and external misfortunes, as inconveniencies and diſadvantages only; they may make us leſs happy, but they cannot make us miſerable. And truly, if we ſhould here ſuppoſe, or take for granted, that there were another life, or that the pleaſures of virtue triumphing over calamities and afflictions, were conſiderably great; this opinion cannot imply ſo great an abſurdity as ſome would faſten upon it, or be a mere λογομαχία, or idle contention of words, ſince I cannot tell with what conſonancy to truth, or propriety of ſpeech, we can call thoſe troubles or hardſhips *evils*, which directly tend to procure for us an infinite good, or a pleaſure which doth abundantly outweigh our ſufferings.

What impreſſions evils do in fact make upon men.

I think, 'tis now ſufficiently evident, that natural evils are not of that mighty efficacy and deadly venomous quality, that it ſhould be thought that a little evil doth more effectually contribute to miſery, than a great

great deal of good can to our happineſs: 'tis apparent how ſlight the impreſſions are, which they *ought* to make upon us. It will now be time to conſider, what impreſſions they do generally make upon us, what their real effect commonly is, how men are generally moved and affected by them. 'Tis true; there are ſome who mix heaven and earth upon every ſlight occaſion; that will receive good, but no evil at the hand of God; moſt inſenſible of bleſſings, but extremely tender and ſenſible of any evil: but this ſpeaks not the nature of evil, but of man; it ſpeaks him ungrateful, but not the evil intolerable. Nor is human nature to be meaſur'd by this wining querulous humour of a few, but by the ſenſe and temper of the generality: amongſt whom 'tis eaſy to obſerve, how inſtinct teaches us to elude the ſtroke and force of evil: nature opens its arms, and enlarges itſelf to receive good, and all the powers of the mind greedily ſtrive to ſhare in it: but it contracts and ſhrinks, retires and ſtands upon its defence at the approach of evil: 'tis apt to flatter itſelf, and apt to hope, apt to leſſen evil and magnify good, apt to put off the thoughts of approaching trouble and to anticipate its pleaſures: 'tis full of great deſigns and gaudy projects, and eaſily prone to delight and content itſelf with thin, airy, and imaginary ſchemes of good: this, and much more is evident in a thouſand daily inſtances of human life; by which 'tis plain, nature in the contrivance of man kindly deſign'd to fit and diſpoſe him for happineſs, by giving him ſuch inclinations as might ſerve to leſſen the evil, to in-

creaſe

creaſe the good, to ſupply the defect of this mortal and imperfect ſtate. Is it not manifeſt, that whereas evil looks leſs to us, good looks bigger at a diſtance; we are willing to help fortune, and call in the aids of fancy, to adorn and enrich her gifts. Nor is it eaſy to defeat man of this humour: he dreams of a bottomleſs abyſs in every good, in every pleaſure; and, notwithſtanding the daily confutations of experience, he ſtill deſires to repeat his enjoyments over again, as if he did ſtill hope to find ſome new untaſted ſweet, ſome pleaſure undiſcovered, untried before. How apt are we to flatter ourſelves, and willing to be flatter'd! every man repreſents himſelf and ſtate under the faireſt idea that he can poſſibly frame of it, and turns away his eye and thought from every thing that may offend him; beauty, ſtrength, health, underſtanding, wiſdom, reputation, attendants, power, wealth, and whatever future good he can form, tho' but a ſlender pretenſion to, make up the gay idea; nay, and even long life and undiſturb'd ſecurity, are there drawn as two pillars to ſupport the building, the daring but kind confidence of man, that makes himſelf the maſter of fate and fortune! If you ſhould mark this tablet with never ſo prying and curious an eye, you would not be able to diſcover either deformity or folly, or diſhonour, or poverty, or diſeaſe, or death: for theſe, man, kind to himſelf, baniſhes far from his thoughts, and ſuffers not to enter into the pourtraiture of himſelf. And hence it is, that moſt men never diſturb life with the apprehenſion of its end, and never feel death till they are dying;

dying; kind inſtinct ſhewing us an eaſier way to leſſen this evil, than the reaſon of moſt philoſophers ever could, making our ſuffering extremely ſhort; and even then too, almoſt in the midſt of death, men fondly dream of, and hope for life, and can ſcarcely ſuffer their hope to expire in the laſt gaſp: nay, ſo willing to be deluded, ſo eaſy to be impos'd upon are men, that they make even thoſe things which are the trophies of death and the monuments of man's frailty and vanity, miniſter to them ſome ſlight comforts at leaſt againſt mortality; they divert and entertain themſelves with the mourning and pomp of their obſequies, with blacks and tombs, with the dying echo's of ſurviving reputation, and with the grandeur and felicity of their poſterity; as if they did fondly perſuade themſelves that they ſhould be concerned in all theſe things, that ſomething beyond the grave did relate to them, and that they did not utterly periſh and die. And if this kind as well as obſtinate hope do in ſome meaſure break the force of the greateſt evil, that is death, we cannot but expect that it ſhould be highly ſerviceable to man in moving him to deſpiſe, or enabling him to vanquiſh leſs evils: hence 'tis that no examples of the inconſtancy or change of fortune, of the incertainty of royal or popular favour, no inſtances of ſlighted ſervice, deluded hope, ſudden death, or any thing of this kind, are ſufficient to diſcourage the attempts, the purſuits of mankind after worldly things. We boldly adventure upon thoſe ſeas which we ſee ſcattered over with numerous wrecks, and confidently purſue

sue those paths, where we every moment meet with the ominous ruins of disappointed hope, and fruitless drudgery, and baffled presumption. Thus it is; I determin'd not that thus it ought to be, I examin'd not what is here the office of philosophy, or the work of virtue; I have barely represented the humour and inclination of man, only that you may see that he is not such a defenceless, shiftless creature, but that his reason dares confront, and can vanquish evils in open battle and by downright force, and his instinct elude them by various, and those, (if well-conducted) useful and innocent arts. It doth therefore appear, that as the number of evils is not greater than that of goods, so neither is the vigour and energy of the one so much greater than that of the other, that a little evil should outweigh a great deal of good; that a little evil should contribute more to a man's misery, than a great deal of good to his happiness. There remains nothing further to be examined, but,

Thirdly, That fancy which ascribes man's portion of good and evil to time or chance, *&c.* not man's virtue or industry, to any thing but to himself: and he that can with confidence affirm this, may with as good grace assert, that there is neither wisdom nor folly in the world; for, if there be, this imagination must soon vanish, since wisdom is nothing else but the choice of true good, and rejection of evil, the pursuit of our true happiness, by all the most rational aud probable means,

3. *Man's good or evil depends upon himself, from the nature of wisdom and folly.*

and

and a declining and flying from all thoſe things that are repugnant to it. And tho' ſucceſs and good fortune do not always attend wiſdom and virtue, yet you ſhall never perſuade any but mad men or fools, that 'tis in vain to be virtuous, or irrational to be wiſe. *Solomon* has indeed obſerved as an inſtance or proof of the vanity of all things, *That the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, neither yet bread to the wiſe, nor riches to men of underſtanding, nor yet favour to men of ſkill*, Eccleſ. ix. I exempt not the wiſe from ſubjection to time and chance, which is all that *Solomon* complains of here: but notwithſtanding, I muſt ever think with him, That *wiſdom excels folly as much as light doth darkneſs*, Eccleſ. ii. Not only becauſe chearful, delightful to itſelf, but alſo becauſe 'tis the happieſt guide of human life, bleſt generally with ſucceſs, as well as rich in intrinſick good, and in ſome meaſure ſelf-ſufficient: nor does our *Engliſh* proverb, *Fools have the Fortune*, imply any more, than that the proſperity of fools is to be imputed to their fortune, that of wiſe men to their merit: that ſucceſs does commonly wait upon virtue and wiſdom, and nothing but an extraordinary chance can turn it upon the fool or ſinner; tho' all this while I underſtand ſucceſs in things neceſſary, not ſuperfluous; for I cannot ſee, how it can be any diſparagement to providence to turn that plenty another way, which would not, like ſoft diſtilling rains and dew, cheriſh, refreſh, and increaſe the tender plants, wiſdom and virtue; but, like a flood, waſh away the earth from their roots,

and

and either utterly extirpate them, or leave them oppreſt and buried in rubbiſh. If this were not true, if the experience as well as reaſon of mankind did not confirm it, men would not ſerve apprenticeſhips to trades, men would not ſtrive with toil or hazard to make their point; but lazily and ſecurely ſtay till fortune rain in golden ſhowers into their laps.

By a recapitulation of all that has been hitherto diſcourſed, it may eaſily appear how far I have advanced in the proof of that aſſertion I undertook to make good, namely, that happineſs may be attained in this world. I have ſhew'd, that ſome are happier than others, or at leaſt leſs miſerable; and that this difference of condition or ſtate, is to be imputed to the virtues of ſome, and the vices of others. I have prov'd, that the world abounds with good things, and there is no appetite nor capacity of man, that may not find objects proper and agreeable, and ſuch as in a great meaſure may delight and ſatisfy; and that man is endow'd with ſuch a variety of faculties and ſenſes, that there is ſcarce any thing in all the variety of beings the world contains, which he is not capable of enjoying. From whence it clearly follows, that man may be happy in the enjoyment of theſe good things, unleſs the evil of life ſour and embitter the good, or the attainment of the good be out of the power of man. To remove all ſuſpicion of both which, I diſcours'd ſomething, tho' briefly, of the nature of evil, and the nature of man, evincing plainly the impotence and feebleneſs of the one, and the ſtrength and preparations of the

other:

other: and, for the close of all, I have endeavour'd to make it manifest, that good and evil are not so much the result of time or chance, &c. as the necessary consequence of wisdom and folly. From all which the conclusion that naturally arises, is this; that if a man be miserable, 'tis his own fault; or, which is all one, a man may be happy if he will, which was the thing to be prov'd.

A recapitulatory conclusion.

Let us now make a close application of all that has been said, to the wants and necessities of mankind; what the evidence, what the conviction, what the real use and force of this discourse is. I am unhappy, I am miserable; whoe'er thou art that sayest so, thou must needs mean one of these two things. Thou dost enjoy no good, or art oppress with evil: if the latter, I demand what evil? Speak out, speak plainly. There are three sorts of evils; the evils of the mind, the evils of the body, the evils of fortune. Which of these art thou oppress by? The evils of the mind? These are either sinful passions, or, what is the effect of them, guilty fears: nothing can compel thee to be wicked; cease to be wicked, and thou wilt cease to fear. The evils of the body? They are generally the effect of unruly passions and a disorderly life; and where they are not, the pleasures of the mind will outweigh the pains of the body. The evils of fortune? 'Tis in my power whether these shall be really evils, or no: they befal thy possessions, not thee: the foolish and vicious mind only suffers in these; the wise and virtu-

ous one is much above them: 'tis therefore thy own fault, if thou be oppreſt with evil. But, wilt thou ſay the former? I enjoy no good, no ſatisfactory good. Why, is there no good to be enjoy'd? I have already proved the contrary; and, if I had not, how eaſy were it here to do it? There's truth to entertain thy underſtanding, moral perfections to delight thy will, variety of objects to treat thy ſenſes, the excellencies of the viſible and inviſible world to be enjoy'd by thee: Why then doſt thou defer to live? Why doſt thou not begin to enjoy? Here 'tis evident that thou muſt be forced to ſay one of theſe two things; either that thou art not capable of enjoying the bleſſings, or that they are out of thy reach, out of thy power: To ſay, thou art not capable of 'em, is to renounce the faculties of thy ſoul, and the ſenſes of thy body: to ſay they are out of thy reach, is in effect to ſay, that virtue and vice, wiſdom and folly are all one; or, which is every jot as abſurd, that thou art wicked and ſottiſh, and canſt not help it. And this is that indeed which in effect all do ſay, that accuſe fortune, or fate, or nature, or any thing but themſelves, as the cauſes of their miſery; and yet, as abſurd as this is, it muſt now be examined; becauſe the minds of men are perverted and diſcouraged by ſuch notions. I will therefore now proceed to the next thing, that is, to anſwer the objections againſt the attainment of happineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

God not the cauſe of man's miſery.

Object. I. *Imputing to God man's miſery,* anſwered; *and God's goodneſs and holineſs* aſſerted. *The tranſition to the objections. The importance of the right notions of God. Polytheiſm, ſuperſtition and atheiſm. The iſſue of wrong ones.* Sect. I. *Of the goodneſs of God.* 1. *God proved infinitely good. The abſurdity of the contrary. God the original of all perfections. The teſtimony of pagans and ſcripture.* Object. 1. *From God's dealings with the pagans,* anſwered. Object. 2. *Other diſpenſations* vindicated. 2. *Of the influence of God's goodneſs on man. Whether God's goodneſs extended to man, concerns not the main objection. That it dies, is proved; from whence inferr'd.* 1. *That God is not the cauſe of man's miſery. This proved by reaſon and authority, human and divine.* 2. *That he is forward to aſſiſt man in acquiring happineſs.* 3. *Divine aſſiſtance, what it imports. The manner of it conſidered and freed from contradictions. This aſſiſtance farther proved in fact, by God's government of Chriſtians, Jews, and Pagans. The idolatry of the philoſophers,* examined. Sect. II. *Of God's holineſs. From whence is inferr'd, what is neceſſary on our ſide to intitle us to divine aſſiſtance.*

WOuld men talk coherently, the assertion of my former chapter would meet but few opposers; none can be rationally allow'd to deny the possibility of happiness, but such as assert fate; for he that leaves to man his liberty, leaves him in a capacity of happiness; it being hardly possible to conceive, that man should be free in his choice of good or evil, and yet necessarily or unavoidably miserable: besides, few of those who are fond of fate, are willing to extend its empire over the liberty of man's mind: it being as easy to confute their fancy, if they did, by some instance of a free choice, as it was by moving or walking to confute his, who denied motion.

If it be in the next place considered, that none can rationally maintain fate, but such as deny a God, since the belief of a God does naturally include his creation and government of the world; and this again naturally infers, either vice or virtue, rewards or punishments: but on the other hand, the denial of a God, and the admitting no principle of all things but *matter*, does not only introduce a fatal connection and dependence of events on their causes, but also renders every notion of the mind of man as necessary and determinate, as that of fire, wind, or water. All this put together amounts to thus much, that none shall exclude happiness, but such as exclude God and liberty out of the world; and since very few, I hope, are guilty of this, I ought to have very few antagonists. But when I am to answer the objections, I am not to consider so much what men

should

ſhould ſay, as what they do; nor muſt I chalk out my own path, but follow men in that they take, tho' it be far enough from being the neareſt way. Since therefore men are wont to impute their miſery one while to God, and another while to chance, now to fate, and anon to incapacity, I muſt examine what truth or juſtice there is in theſe complaints.

In this chapter therefore I ſhall not only vindicate God from all aſperſions and calumnies, but alſo fully aſſert the love of God to mankind; whereby I ſhall not only baffle all the poor pretences of ſuch as charge God directly or obliquely with their miſery; but alſo more ſtrongly eſtabliſh my own poſition, by demonſtrating God's readineſs to contribute all aſſiſtance that is neceſſary to our attainment of happineſs. In proſecuting this, I ſhall,

Firſt, Evince the importance of entertaining right notions of God.

Secondly, Becauſe of all God's attributes, his goodneſs and holineſs have the moſt direct influence on the preſent queſtion, I ſhall particularly confine myſelf to theſe two. To begin with the *firſt*. If what *Epictetus* ſaid with reſpect to many gods had been ſpoke with reſpect to one, nothing had ever been ſaid with more exact truth, or a better pois'd judgment. The firſt and chief thing in religion is to have rational and true notions of God, it being otherwiſe impoſſible that religion ſhould ſerve the great

True notions of God, of great importance.

Τὸς περὶ Θεὸς ὑποτέθειας ἰσθι ὅτι τὸ κεφάλαιόν ἐκεῖνο ἔστιν ὀρθὰς ὑπολαμβάνειν περὶ αὐτῶν ἔχειν.
Epictet. Enchir. c. 37.

great intereſt of God's glory and man's happineſs; for falſe and unworthy notions of him muſt needs bereave God of the honour and worſhip due to him from his creatures, by alienating the minds of men, and betraying them into ſuperſtition, idolatry or atheiſm: and thus that religion, which was deſigned to glorify God, by the manifeſtation and acknowledgment of his divine excellencies and perfections, and to advance man into a ſtate of bleſſedneſs, by influencing his life, and filling his mind with ſecurity and chearfulneſs, ſhall be perverted to ends directly contrary, and prove inſtrumental to diſhonour God, and render man miſerable. The truth of this has been too evident in thoſe viſible effects of ignorance, or miſrepreſentation of the divine nature amongſt the *Gentiles*; the want of conceiving aright his omnipotence and immenſity, *&c.* joined with the numerous neceſſities of mankind, did bring forth, or at leaſt confirm polytheiſm; groundleſs apprehenſions of cruelty in God brought forth ſuperſtition, and the abſurdities of polytheiſm and ſuperſtition gave being to atheiſm; and at this day there are many miſchiefs, which I muſt impute either to falſe notions of God, or want of juſt conſideration of the true ones, or at leaſt, to not arguing clearly and truly from 'em. For from one of theſe reaſons it proceeds, that the worſhip of ſome men are ſo ſlight, empty and trifling; the religion of others ſo melancholy and uncomfortable, and truly ſuperſtitious: and I am afraid, there is too much of atheiſtical looſeneſs, ſenſual, carnal preſumption and

wretchleſs

wretchleſs deſpair, and many other evils owing to the ſame cauſe. Had men worthy notions of God, how were it poſſible they ſhould ever fancy that God would accept the ſincerity and devotion of a communicant ſitting, but not kneeling? after ſupper, but not in the morning? that the whiteneſs of the garment would pollute and unhallow the ſpiritual ſacrifice of prayer and praiſes? and ſuch like. Would not a right notion of God eaſily convince ſuch a weak and ſcrupulous trifler, that God was not to be pleaſed, but by ſincere and ſubſtantial holineſs and righteouſneſs; nor to be diſpleaſed, but by voluntary wickedneſs? all things elſe weighing nothing in the balance of the ſanctuary, and not deſerving the notice or regard of the Governor of the world: and tho' ſuch a one ſhould ſuppoſe his ſcruples warranted by divine command; and conſequently becauſe the ſovereignty of God renders all his commandments indiſputably authoritative and binding, he ſhould therefore think himſelf as indiſpenſibly oblig'd to reject theſe things, as to ſhun a ſin; yet even here a right underſtanding of the divine nature would ſoon inſtruct him how to diſtinguiſh the divine commands, and teach him that thoſe which did enjoin holineſs and righteouſneſs, were the ſtanding and fundamental laws of the divine government; that thoſe, which did enjoin duties ſubſervient to that end, were of an inferior nature, and did bind in proportion to their neceſſity and tendency; that ſuch, as did enjoin or forbid things of a more remote and diſtant nature, circumſtantial, ritual, *&c.* were

merely positive and arbitrary, temporary and mutable; and the interposing necessity of superior duties is at any time sufficient to supersede their obligation. To proceed to other effects of mis-conceptions of the divine nature; how were it possible that any one, who rightly understood the unspeakable goodness of God, should, after he had done all he could, be tormented with doubtful fears and jealousies concerning his state, nay, sometimes with a melancholy dread of God, as if he were a hard master, and impossible to be pleas'd? or how could such a persuasion as this, that one were damn'd from eternity, and that neither prayers, nor tears, nor industry, could ever reverse the fatal sentence, find any entertainment in that man who was possessed with a true sense and firm belief of the boundless love which God has for all his rational creatures.

It is evident therefore, of what importance 'tis to propagate and settle in the minds of men a right understanding of the divine nature; and of all the attributes of God, there are none that have a more immediate and powerful influence, either upon the conduct of man's life, or the comfort of his mind, than these two, his holiness and goodness: these make us willing and desirous to believe that there is a God; these make us love him and depend upon him, as one from whom we may rationaly expect all that is good; *He that comes to God* (saith St. *Paul*) *must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all those that diligently seek him.*

Πιστευειν γαρ δειτον ὁτι ἐστιν καὶ τοις ἐκζητουσιν αὐτον μισθαποδοτης γινεται. Heb.

These

Theſe words do not only aſſert the being of a God, but alſo his holineſs and goodneſs; both which may be clearly inferr'd from three propoſitions couch'd in thoſe words of the apoſtle, *that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Firſt, That all men may ſeek God diligently if they will. Secondly, That it is the deſire of God that they ſhould do ſo. And, Thirdly, That God will reward all that do ſo. On theſe principles is religion founded, on theſe principles the honour of God, and the happineſs of man muſt be eſtabliſhed. I will therefore diſcourſe here, firſt, of the goodneſs; and ſecondly, of the holineſs of God; which I diſtinguiſh from one another only for method's ſake.

Treating of the goodneſs of God, I will,

Firſt, Prove it by undeniable arguments.

Secondly, I will ſhew that it extends itſelf to man.

Thirdly, I will explain the nature of divine aſſiſtance, I mean, that which God vouchſafes man in order to happineſs.

Firſt, therefore to begin with the proofs of God's infinite goodneſs.

Of the goodneſs of God.

Cruelty was the property of the Gentile gods, and not of the true God; human blood, in which the *Canaanites*, *Carthaginians*, and others ſacrificed, was an oblation fit for *Baal*, *Moloch*, &c. that is, for devils, not for God; innate wrath and cruelty is inconſiſtent with a happy nature or happy ſtate; for theſe are furious and tormenting paſſions; nor can we imagine that ſuch a being ſhould make its reſi-

dence

dence in heaven, a place of peace and love, or be delighted with hallelujah's and adorations of angels: this were no pleaſure, no muſick to a being, in whom wrath and cruelty were predominant. Nor were thoſe good, thoſe holy, thoſe charitable ſpirits fit attendants, fit miniſters for ſuch a being. No, could we ſuppoſe (as ſome hereticks once fancied) that there were two firſt principles, a good, and bad one; could we ſuppoſe, there were an evil God, one in whom cruelty and wrath were his beloved attributes; we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that he would make hell his court, that his guards and courtiers would be fiends and furies, and that the ſhrieks and torments of wretched creatures would be the pleaſure, the harmony he delighted in: this were a God fit for a *Hobbiſt*; one who can diſcern no difference between virtue and vice, between good and evil, between love or charity, and deviliſhneſs. And yet I cannot in charity but retract and condemn this thought: for oh! no other God is fit for him, but he whom he denieth! no other God is fit for ſuch a wretch but the God of love and mercy! to whom I recommend him, and proceed.

All who believe a God, muſt believe him a moſt perfect being; for whence elſe ſhould the ſcatter'd perfections of his creatures have beginning? But if any man will ſay, that there is no difference between perfections and imperfections, I would know why doth he reverence wiſdom more than folly? or why he dotes on beauty rather than deformity? or, if he tell me, that he acknowledges a diſtinction between natural, but none

none between moral perfections or imperfections; not to urge, that the virtues of the *will* are as truly natural as those of the understanding, the capacities of, and aptitudes to each, being born with us, tho' not the habits; and the one being as agreeable to the nature, and consonant to the interest of man as the other; I will ask him, why he does not love the froward and peevish, as well as the sweet and gentle? the cruel and implacable, as well as the kind and charitable? the proud and wilful, as well as the humble and modest? and whatever answer he gives me, will abundantly serve to refute his fancy. If then there be natural and moral perfections, and God be the most perfect being, we must needs ascribe to him those properties which we look upon as perfections in his rational creatures, and that such in degrees as exempt him from all imperfection: if therefore goodness, charity, clemency, be universally acknowledged for perfections, we must necessarily suppose them in God in the most perfect degree. Nor let any one think it absurd that the same should be the virtues of God and man, of a finite and infinite being; for we suppose them in God in a manner suitable to his majesty, and in man in a manner suitable to his meanness; and unless we acknowledge this there cannot possibly be any settled and certain reason for our love, or hope, or dependence, the great parts of the divine worship. That therefore God is good and merciful, a lover of man, was ever the constant and unanimous sense of the wise and good part of mankind: poets indeed and painters, degenerous,

daſtardly, cruel and vicious men, did repreſent the Deity under hideous ſhapes, and in ſuch colours as their guilty fears or vices furniſh'd 'em with: but philoſophers, as *Plutarch* obſerves, were always wont to repreſent him moſt amiable and lovely; always tempering his majeſty with love and goodneſs; his power and juſtice with tenderneſs, mercy and compaſſion. Hence it was, that they were wont to attribute all thoſe things which were extremely uſeful and beneficial, to God as the Author of them; as government, laws, arts, and ſciences: they look'd upon their gods as the guides and guardians of men, and aſcribe to them whatever they atchiev'd bravely and happily in life. But on the other hand, frowardneſs, wrath and cruelty did ever ſeem ſo ugly and deteſtable to wiſe and virtuous men, that they not only deſpis'd, but abhorr'd as well the wickedneſs as folly of ſuperſtition, which repreſented God, or rather diſhonour'd him, under ſuch characters. And this notion of the Deity, which repreſented that being which was kind and benign, as terrible and dreadful; which was gracious and fatherly, as tyrannical; which was friendly and careful of us, as injurious and hurtful; which was mild and gentle, as fierce and ſavage; gave ſuch a diſtaſte and diſguſt to all ingenuous tempers, that they thought atheiſm a much more excuſable impiety than ſuperſtition. Hence is that of *Plutarch* (ſo generally prais'd by

'Ανθρωπίνως γὰρ τὸ θεῖον σκιαγραφῶμεν μᾶλλ' ἡμερώτατον & μεγαλοψύχοτατον μᾶλλὰ βίας & κολάσεως. *Plut. de Superſtition.*

Οἱ δὲ δεξάζοντες φοβερὸν τὸ εἶναι τὸ θεὸν, & τύραννον τὸ κηδόμενον, & βλαβερὸν τὸ ὠφελοῦν, & τὸ ἀμελὲς ὄργιλον & δυσμενές.

by all writers;) I had rather men ſhould ſay of me, there neither was, nor is ſuch a one as *Plutarch*, than that they ſhould ſay, that he was a man of a fickle, unconſtant, froward, revengeful and implacable temper. Let us not therefore entertain ſuch an idea of God, as human nature would recoil from, and ſtart back pale and ſcar'd at the ſight: let us not faſten thoſe characters upon God, which a good temper'd man, if charg'd with them, would look upon as the fouleſt reproaches and moſt injurious accuſations; eſpecially ſince a defect is not only more conſpicuous, but more reproachful, where there ſhould be nothing but perfection: and peeviſhneſs and cruelty are infinitely more miſchievous in an Almighty, than impotent being. I might ſhun *Polycrates*, *Dionyſius*, *Periander*; but how ſhall I ſhun God? I might leave *Samos*, *Sicily*, or *Corinth*, and where clemency and juſtice made their abode, I might make mine; but whether ſhall I go, what place ſhall be my refuge, if the governor of the world were but an almighty tyrant? thus it is manifeſt, ſuch kind of repreſentations of God tend not to enamour man of God, but to alienate and eſtrange him: they tend not to advance religion, but ſuperſtition; they tend to make men dread God, but not to love him: they are therefore to be baniſh'd out of the world, and God is to be repreſented ſuch as our dear Lord, who lay in the boſom of his Father, has revealed him, *a*

Ἔγωγ' ἂν ἂν ἑλέσθαιμι μᾶλλον τοὺς ἀνθρωπους λέγειν περὶ ἐμοῦ μήτε γεγονέναι τὸ παράπαν, μηδ' εἶναι Πλούταρχον ὁ λέγεται, ὅτι Πλούταρχος ἦν ἀνθρωπος ἀστάθμητος, εἰμεμφὴς, χαρὰς σχῆσε ἔχων, ἐπὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσι νέμεσητὸς, μνησίκακος. Ibid.

God

God of hope, a God of love, a God, who is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. This is the dictate of nature; this is the dictate of the Spirit, *God is love.* Let it not be thought an abſurd or barren tautology, tho' I ſhould recite this one text a thouſand times oftener than I do: for no tongue can expreſs the divine nature ſo much to the life, as he who was inſpired by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of love.

God's dealing with the Pagans vindicated.

Nor let God's dealing with the gentile world before the revelation of Chriſtianity, be alledg'd as an objection againſt the goodneſs of God, and his tenderneſs and compaſſion for mankind: 'tis true, *God in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways; and the times of this ignorance he winked at,* Acts xiv. and xvii. He publiſh'd no reveal'd law to the *Gentiles* from heaven; he deputed no prophets to 'em, as to his people the *Jews*, with a commiſſion to reſtore by ſigns and miracles, that natural religion, conformably to which they were to worſhip God; which is the import of thoſe places of St. *Paul:* and yet 'tis true that the belief of the living and true God, and the natural law of good and evil, was ſtrangely effaced and obliterated amongſt the *Gentiles.* But notwithſtanding all this, it muſt be remembered too, 1. *That God left not himſelf without a witneſs* in any age of *Gentiliſm*; the heathen were never deſtitute of ſo much light, as might have conducted 'em to God, and that happineſs he deſign'd 'em: for, beſides the traditions

traditions tranſmitted from *Noah* to poſterity, the book of nature and providence was ever open to 'em, and this did in moſt legible characters aſſert the being of one ſupreme God, and inſtruct 'em in the knowledge of his power and goodneſs. Thus St. *Paul*; *Nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without a witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs*, Acts xiv. Nor was this teſtimony ſo unſucceſsful, but that in all ages there were ſome excellent men, who did aſcribe the original and government of the world to God, and gave ſuch an account of his holineſs and goodneſs as was ſufficient to have founded a rational and excellent worſhip upon: theſe were ſo many lights ſhining in dark places, as ſo many juſtifications of divine providence, and reproaches of man's wilful ſtupidity.

Sunt autem alii philoſophi, & hi quidem magni atque nobiles, qui Deorum mente atque ratione omnem mundum adminiſtrari & regi cenſeant; neque vero id ſolum, ſed etiam ab iiſdem vitæ hominum conſuli & provideri: nam & fruges & reliqua quæ terra pariat, & tempeſtates, ac temporum varietatis, cœlique mutationes, quibus omnia quæ terra gignat, maturata pubeſcat a diis immortalibus tribui generi humano putant. *Cic. l.* 1. *de natura Deorum.*

2. 'Tis not in the leaſt to be doubted, but that the nature of their duty, and conſequently the condition of their happineſs, was proportion'd and confined to thoſe manifeſtations which God made 'em, to thoſe obligations which he laid before 'em, and to that ſtrength and aſſiſtance which he vouchſafed 'em: for God is not a hard maſter, he will not make good the accuſation of the wicked ſervant; *he will not take up*

up what he laid not down, nor reap what he did not ſow, Luke xix. In a word, if God do at the laſt day deal with men according to thoſe ſeveral œconomies of his providence which they were under; and if he has afforded all nations means proportionable to thoſe duties he required of them, and to thoſe degrees of happineſs to which he deſign'd them: then he was always the God of the *Gentiles* as well as once of the *Jews*, or now of the *Chriſtians*; and there is no one part of the whole ſeries of providence, which can give us any colour to call into queſtion the care or goodneſs of God towards mankind. This, I think, is enough to remove this objection as it lay in my way: if my deſign did not haſten me on, and I did not judge this ſatisfactory, I could eaſily make appear God's goodneſs to the *Gentiles*, by preſenting the reader with a ſcheme of the religion of the *Pythagoreans*, *Platonics*, and *Stoics*; by examining the difference of the idolatry of the wiſe and virtuous part of the *Gentile* world, and that of the ſottiſh and vicious part of it; by conſidering the aſſiſtance that God vouchſafed 'em, and giving an account whence it came to paſs, that the worſhip of one true God by holineſs and virtue, was ſo far ſtifled and oppreſs'd in the *Gentile* world: but I have ſaid enough to vindicate the goodneſs of God; and the ſtate of *Gentiles* and infidels does not ſo nearly concern my preſent enquiry, as to deſerve ſo exact a diſcuſſion.

The

The barrenneſs of ſome countries, the ſervitude and poverty of ſome people, is a much ſlighter objection; for till it can appear, that poverty is an enemy to virtue, or that wealth, which is the inſtrument to luxury, and the nurſe of ſloth and wantonneſs, is abſolutely neceſſary to man's happineſs; it will weigh but very little againſt ſo many demonſtrations of divine love, that he has not heaped upon all nations ſo many temporal bleſſings as might put them into a capacity of being lazy, wanton, and inſolent.

Other diſpenſations of God vindicated.

Now give me leave to make a ſtand, and, like a traveller when he has gained an aſcent, look back upon the way I have gone, and ſee how much of my journey I have diſpatched. My undertaking was, to demonſtrate the love of God to mankind; thus far I have advanced towards this with undeniable evidence. I have proved, that peeviſhneſs, malignity, and cruelty cannot belong to God, becauſe this were inconſiſtent with the perfection of his nature, or the happineſs of his ſtate: nor can it rationally be ſuppoſed, that the ſame properties ſhould belong to thoſe evil ſpirits, which for a long time deluded the world, and that God, who has done ſo much to deſtroy that kingdom of darkneſs, to reſcue man, and to reſtore him to a capacity of happineſs and glory. How could it be, that God ſhould have done ſo much, as it appears he has in the contexture of our nature, and the contrivance of our ſtate, to make us in love with goodneſs, and irreconcileable enemies to tyranny, cruelty, arbitrary revenge, *&c.*

if he himſelf were paſſionate, furious and arbitrary in his cruelties? Nay, I have advanced further, and have prov'd, *Secondly*, that boundleſs love and goodneſs are the unqueſtionable attributes of God: for the very ſame arguments which exclude all manner of imperfections and evil from the Deity, do neceſſarily aſſert to it all manner of perfection and good: nor doth the unconceiveable majeſty and eminence of the divine nature only, but alſo the indigence and weakneſs of human nature, require this; ſince without it he could not be the object of our love, or dependence, and conſequently our worſhip.

Having proceeded thus far, and proved, that tyranny and cruelty are utterly repugnant to the divine nature, and boundleſs love and goodneſs the eſſential and inſeparable properties of it; I can ſcarce think it neceſſary to prove that the emanations of this his goodneſs do extend even to man: for tho' the *Epicureans* acknowledging God perfect, did at the ſame time allow him no other employment than the enjoyment of his own perfections; and though *Ariſtotle* confined the providence of God, and conſequently the irradiation of his goodneſs, within heaven; and tho', laſtly, before the creation of the world, we are uncapable of conceiving any ſubjects about which divine love could exerciſe itſelf, and conſequently can conceive of it no otherwiſe than confined within himſelf: all which ſeems to conclude thus much, that the Deity may be infinitely good, and yet this goodneſs not extend itſelf to man: all this concerns

not

not our preſent queſtion: for tho' man ſhould not be the object of divine goodneſs, yet if God be infinitely good, this will be enough to free man from unreaſonable and ſuperſtitious fear of him, and to acquit God from the leaſt ſuſpicion of being the cauſe of human miſery; which is the utmoſt I was obliged to make good in purſuance of the deſign of this chapter. Beſides, they who accuſe God of their miſery, do not ſuppoſe him unconcerned about all things but himſelf, as *Epicurus*; nor bound and limit his providence within the incloſures of heaven; but do plainly ſuppoſe all the affairs of mankind to depend upon the firſt contrivance of God in the creation, or upon the over-ruling influences of his providence in his preſent government of the world.

However, I am not willing to quit one inch of the ground I have got; and therefore,

Secondly, I muſt now take notice, that the goodneſs of God extends to man, and has a particular regard to his happineſs. The world being now created, and mankind formed after God's image (τοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμεν, *We are his offspring*, ſaith St. *Paul* out of the poet) unactive and unconcern'd love ſeems to me a contradiction, and infinite boundleſs goodneſs, confined within heaven, cannot but ſeem as groſs an one: let it therefore remain an unſhaken truth, that God is good, and that his goodneſs doth exert and expreſs itſelf towards mankind; and we ſhall from hence gain theſe two points.

The goodneſs of God extends to man.

1. That God is not the cauſe of man's miſery: and, what is more yet,

2. That he is moſt ready and willing to further and aſſiſt him in all his endeavours after happineſs.

The firſt of theſe is apparent: for if God be infinitely good, then every thing that came out of his hands, muſt in the ſtate of his creation have been exceeding good; the end of the creation muſt have been ſomething extremely kind and gracious; and the law he preſcribed his creatures for the attainment of that end, muſt be as good as wiſe: this muſt have been the gracious ſtate of things when God contrived this wonderful frame of nature, when he erected this vaſt work, the world; and in all the continued progreſs of divine providence, we are to expect no other acts of government than what may become the moſt glorious prince, the moſt tender father: for the ſame immenſe goodneſs that once created, doth ever continue to rule the world. Let us not therefore accuſe God, but ourſelves, if we be not happy. Bleſſings indeed and mercies, like warm ſun and fruitful ſeaſons, deſcend upon us without our importunity or merit; but evils and miſchiefs come not till our ſins and provocations have pull'd 'em down upon us. *Solon* indeed in *Herodotus* tells *Cræſus*, τὸ Θεῖον ϑονήρον καὶ ταραχῶδες, that the Deity was envious and froward, and delighted to magnify itſelf in the diſturbance of the ſettled happineſs

happineſs and calm of poor men: but alas! 'tis our fondneſs or our pride, our peeviſhneſs or our wantonneſs, which raiſes in us theſe unworthy thoughts of God; he may indeed, like a kind parent, train up a ſon, through a ſtrict diſcipline, to virtue and glory; he may throw difficulties into our way on purpoſe to reward our conqueſt; he may, like a wiſe phyſician, reſtore us to our health by bitter potions, and will, like an excellent governor, puniſh, if need be, our wanton contempt of love and mercy, by ſeverity and chaſtiſements; but he will never, like a ſavage tyrant, delight in the ſufferings or ruin of innocent or humble ſubjects; he will never preſcribe impoſſible laws, that he may enjoy the pleaſure of bloody executions; he will never make the groans of wretched people his muſick; nor think miſery and death the beſt marks of his abſolute power, or faireſt ornaments of his throne: no, we ſhall never need any other proof to clear the divine Majeſty from any ſuch imputation, than to examine ourſelves, and reflect upon our own behaviour; we ſhall ſoon find that we alone are guilty of our ruin, and that God is utterly free from it; our exceſſive enjoyments create the diſeaſes of the body, and our exceſſive paſſions the pains and torments of the mind, and moſt of the changes in our fortune derive themſelves from both: a languiſhing body, and a languiſhing reputation, a broken eſtate, and a dejected mind, are the common effects of a diſorderly and debauch'd life; and ſuch a life is the natural effect of a mind enſlaved to the

body, and eſtranged from God, not only by a neglect, but by a contempt and defiance of all thoſe means by which a good God deſigned to bring him through virtue to glory; and then at laſt a guilty conſcience, a diſtracted mind, and a moſt melancholy, miſerable death, is the conſequence and end of all. This is the progreſs which our voluntary ſin and folly makes; we cannot think that a good God can direct or neceſſitate us to theſe courſes; they are as repugnant to his laws, as to our own intereſt: and the ſame time we forfeit our happineſs, we diſappoint his love and goodneſs: all the ways and methods of God are kind and gracious, and wiſe, and rational: inanimate bodies do not deſert thoſe offices he has preſcribed them: animals move regularly by thoſe inſtincts he has implanted in them, and ſo both the one and the other do neceſſarily ſerve thoſe excellent ends for which they were created. But man having no neceſſity, but liberty wove into the conſtitution of his nature, and having no compulſory, but only directing law preſcribed him, has perverted his own ways, abus'd his liberty, and made that his ruin, which, if well uſed, had inhanc'd his merit and reward. This is the account which the ſcripture gives us of man's miſery; it imputes it wholly to himſelf, and repreſents his obſtinacy as ungrateful and diſpleaſing to God, as 'tis fatal to himſelf: *O* Iſrael, *thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf*, Hoſ. xiii. *As I live, I delight not in the death of a ſinner; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* Ezek. xxx. *O* Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,

ruſalem, *thou that killeſt the prophets and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?* Matth. xxii. Nor is this account of things which the ſcripture gives us, any other than that which was generally embraced by the heathens, this being not the ſenſe of any particular prepoſſeſſions or private opinion inſtill'd by cuſtom or education, but of natural reaſon, and fairly and eaſily deduced from thoſe notions of divine goodneſs which were univerſally entertained by all judicious and underſtanding heathens: and how ſcandalous a thing were it, if that comfortable and heavenly truth, which the darkneſs and idolatry of the ſuperſtitious could not extinguiſh in the pagan world, ſhould be rejected or ſuppreſs'd by Chriſtians? not the will of the gods, but the luxury and riot of men, is the cauſe of thoſe evils which infeſt the body, &c. Hence that charitable piece of heathen devotion;

Οἱ θεοὶ τῶν κακῶν ἰατροὶ ἀναίτιοι, ὑγιείας, νόσου, ἴσα πάθη σώμασι ἐκλαμψίας ἐχει συμφοίτα, &c. —— Τιθέντι δ' ἀνθρώπους αἰθαλίῳ πάμαν' ἐχεπλὴς Τλήμονας. Jamblicus de Vita Pythag. l. 1, & 2.

Ζεῦ πάτερ ἢ πολλῶν τε κακῶν παυσεῖας ἅπαντας,
Ἢ πᾶσιν δείξαις οἷον τῷ δαίμονι χρῶναι.

O father Jove, *from numerous evils free*
Mankind, or ſhew 'em their ruin's not from thee,
A gracious and benign Deity:
But from themſelves——

I will here add a teſtimony of *Apuleius*, as containing the ſenſe of the *Platonick* philoſophy in this point of God's government of mankind: all the motions of providence are wiſe and regular; nor muſt any evil be aſcribed to God as its cauſe. But this is not all we gain from the aſſurance of God's infinite goodneſs, that we have no reaſon to apprehend an harm or miſchief from him, that he cannot be the author of our miſery: but we may confidently perſuade ourſelves on the other ſide.

Omnia quæ naturaliter & propterea rectè feruntur, providentiæ cuſtodia gubernantur, nec ullius mali cauſa Deo poterit aſcribi. *Apul. de Dogm. Platon.*

Secondly, That he is moſt ready and willing to further and aſſiſt us in all our endeavours after happineſs. And now, methinks, I am ſo far from queſtioning the poſſibility of attaining happineſs, that I begin already to feel and enjoy it; I ſee the day breaking in upon me from above: how can he chuſe but be happy, who is the love, the care of God! I may walk, like *Peter* on the waves, and bid defiance to the ſtorms; I know I ſhall never ſink, whilſt that God upholds me, who calls me this way to him: I can now eaſily believe that my temper may be transformed, my corruptions may be put off, and I be made partaker of a divine nature; ſince the Spirit of God will dwell with me, the light of God will always ſhine upon me, and the power of God will always ſuccour and aid me: can I imagine as much as any colour or pretext, why I ſhould not now be able to attain to an excellent

lent ſtate of virtue, or why this virtue ſhould not be able to vanquiſh all thoſe difficulties that oppoſe my happineſs. ſince I am aſſur'd that God will not refuſe me his Spirit if I aſk it, and that his grace will be ſufficient for me?

You ſee of what vaſt importance this truth is, that God will be always ready to aſſiſt every man in his endeavours after happineſs; and therefore tho' it ſtands here as a neceſſary and undeniable concluſion from the foregoing diſcourſe; tho' the perfection of the divine nature do amount to little leſs than a demonſtration of it: for * beneficence to his creatures is as neceſſarily included in the notion of perfection, as perfection is in the notion of a God: yet, as well for my own pleaſure, as the intereſt of my poſition, which is nearly concerned in this truth, I will dwell a little longer on the confirmation and illuſtration of it. There are three eminent acts of divine aſſiſtance; the *firſt* is, ſuch direction of the events of ſecular affairs, that they may tend to our good: the *ſecond* is, his aſſiſtance of us in the attainment of virtue: and the *third* is, his recruiting us by freſh ſupplies of ſtrength in all our hazardous conflicts and extraordinary trials. Now tho' I could not give an account of the manner how God performs this kind work of his providence, yet ought not that to diſſuade me from the belief of it; becauſe we know, that our com-

* Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τέλειον ἦν αὐταρκὲς, εἰ δὲ μὴ αὐταρκὲς, ὅπως τέλειον εἰ δὲ αὐτάρκες, μηδὲ τέλειον. πῶς ἰσχυὸν; αὐταρκὲς δὲ ὃν καὶ τέλειον καὶ ἰσχυρὸν πάλαι μὲν τὸν τετράποδα τὰ ἀγαθὰ βλάπτει· πάλαι τι τὸν αὐταρκείαν ἔχει· πάλαι δὲ τὸν ἰσχὺν δηλοῖ· βλάπτων δὲ καὶ ἴσχων καὶ δυνάμενος· καὶ τι μηδέν. Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 22.

Divine aſſiſtance what it imports.

prehenſion ought not to be the ſtandard of divine perfections, nor the narrow bounds of our imagination be the utmoſt extent of the Almighty's power. However, 'tis not difficult to explain this aſſiſtance of God in ſuch ſort as may free it from the leaſt ſuſpicion of implying a contradiction.

For, *Firſt*, As to his direction and conduct of temporal events, how eaſy will it be for us to conceive this poſſible to God, if we conſider, *Firſt*, That God can form what impreſſions he pleaſes in the minds of men, and inſpire them with what affections he ſhall think moſt ſerviceable to his deſigns? For there is not the leaſt pretext or colour to imagine, that the ſoul is any more exempt from the ſovereignty of God, than the body; or that God cannot do that which the great, or the cunning, or the eloquent, nay, the popular and ambitious do ſeldom fail to do, raiſe what paſſions he pleaſes in the mind of man: or, if we conſider, *Secondly*, That the power and efficacy of nature is wholly in his hands; that life and death, plenty or poverty, every thing depends upon his will: for the winds and ſeas, earth and air, fire, hail and vapour obey his voice, and are all of them, as often as he pleaſes, the inſtruments and executioners of his will: he that ſtills the ragings of the multitude, and becalms the paſſions of the mighty; he, at whoſe command new creatures enter upon the ſtage of the world, and the old leave it: what is it impoſſible for him to do? nay, what is it this Almighty Governor cannot do, without moving one ſtep out of the common road of his providence, without employing

ploying any extraordinary inſtrument, or exerting any act of extraordinary power? for what ſecular intereſt can there be imagined whoſe ſucceſs or diſappointment depends not upon ſome or other of theſe natural cauſes? And yet we muſt acknowledge further, *Thirdly*, That the Almighty has not prefixed or ſet himſelf ſuch immutable, unalterable laws, but that he has reſerved to himſelf the prerogative of ſuſpending or over-ruling 'em when he pleaſes, I mean with reſpect to the motions of natural bodies or revolutions of ſecular affairs: and if ſuch an interpoſal of a divine power cannot be conceiv'd to be other than a miracle, I muſt confeſs, I do not look upon one age only, but every age, an age of miracles; nay, I believe ſuch as theſe wrought every day for the protection or relief of thoſe who depend upon this Governor of the world; for I know not to what purpoſe I ſhould, like *Jonah* or his mariners, call upon God in a ſtorm, if it were never to be laid till it had naturally ſpent its force and fury; I know not to what purpoſe I ſhould implore the Almighty's direction upon all my deliberations, in perplexed and entangled affairs, if I could expect no other light than what my labouring mind could give itſelf; I know not why I ſhould addreſs myſelf to God in the pains and danger of an inſupportable diſeaſe, if the medicines will be the ſame, and their virtue the ſame, if the fever will abate, and its flames be extinguiſhed, or extinguiſh life in the ſame degree and manner, if I pray, or if I do not. All theſe ways of divine providence are very plain

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and intelligible; and therefore 'tis manifeſt that we may without any abſurdity aſcribe to God ſuch a ſuperintendency and direction over human affairs, as may render the iſſue of 'em moſt ſerviceable to the true intereſt of thoſe that worſhip him.

As to the ſecond part of divine aſſiſtance, which conſiſts in aiding us in the attainment of holineſs and virtue, I do readily acknowlege, as far as this is performed by the internal operations of his Spirit, by the influx of divine light or heavenly vigour; I do no more underſtand the τὸ πῶς, the manner of ſanctification, than that of the creation of the ſoul; this I know, that virtue is the rational work, of a rational creature; 'tis the work of man, tho' aſſiſted by God; 'tis a rational work, which implies the knowledge of our duty, and a power to perform it: and therefore this I know, that this aid muſt conſiſt in the improvement of my rational faculties in ſome acceſſion to the reaſon of my underſtanding, and to the power and liberty of my will. Now, tho' I cannot comprehend how God does this, yet how eaſily can I believe it poſſible for him to do it, ſince 'tis natural to imagine, that he, who created my underſtanding, can improve it, and he, who inveſted me with a rational liberty, can confirm or enlarge it, or, if you pleaſe, reſcue it from that diſeas'd and ſervile condition, unto which it was degenerated, and reſtore it to the health and ſoundneſs of its firſt ſtate?

The third act of divine providence does not imply a new manner, but a new degree of aſſiſtance,

ance, and therefore contains in it no new difficulty: and as to the truth and certainty of this ſort of aſſiſtance, no man who believes the goſpel can queſtion it, ſince this every-where aſcribes as well *perfection* as *converſion* to God, as well the *finiſhing* as the *beginning* of *ſanctification* to his grace; it every-where promiſes us the *might* and *power* of God's Spirit to *ſtrengthen* and *eſtabliſh* us, and *exhorts* us *to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need.*

This time which I have ſpent upon the illuſtration of divine goodneſs towards man, will not, I hope, be judged miſemployed or loſt, if it be conſidered that ſuch is the confidence, or rather ſuch is the wantonneſs of ſome men, that they reject every thing which carries in it, I will not ſay, any ſeeming contradiction, but any ſeeming difficulty.

A further proof of divine aſſiſtance from divine government.

But it does not ſo clearly concern the happineſs of man to be inſtructed in the manner, as to be throughly perſuaded of the truth of divine aſſiſtance; and therefore chuſing rather to be tedious than defective in the proof of it, I will add to thoſe arguments taken from the nature of God, whatever force and ſtrength can be derived from the conſideration of divine government, which is the expreſſion of the divine nature, and the image of its perfection viſible in its effects.

The goſpel contains this doctrine in almoſt every page, and the lives of apoſtles and martyrs are ſo many illuſtrious inſtances of the divine

vine faithfulneſs and love, performing thoſe promiſes which he had made 'em by his Son. The Jewiſh polity was a *Theocracy*. God did for a great while preſide over them immediately, and govern them (if I may ſo ſpeak) without a ſubſtitute or viceroy; repeated miracles, repeated prophecies, extraordinary manifeſtations of himſelf, and extraordinary revelations, were the illuſtrious proofs of God's affection and care for that people; ſo that it were to inſult over my reader's patience, or to reproach his ſtupidity, if I ſhould go about to confirm this truth from the Old or New Teſtament: 'tis therefore only neceſſary to examine what the heathen thought of the neceſſity of this divine aſſiſtance, and what inſtances of it may be found amongſt them.

Whether the *Gentiles* had any notion of the fall and corruption of man, is not here neceſſary to be enquired, but this I am ſure, they were extremely ſenſible of that oppoſition which virtue met with from the world and the body; they were extremely ſenſible that the inclinations of the one, and the affluence and troubles of the other did naturally tend to engage 'em in vice; and therefore tho' they do ſometimes magnify human nature, yet they were not ſo forgetful of their own infirmities, or the condition of this life, as not to judge the aſſiſtance of God indiſpenſibly neceſſary to render them virtuous and happy: hence 'tis, that *Pythagoras*, *Socrates* and *Plato* were eminent in prayer and invocation: Σωκράτης εἰς Πειραιᾶα κατιὼν προσευξόμενός τε θεῷ, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας πρωτερέπετο καὶ ἦν ὁ βίος Σωκράτους μεγὸς εὐχῆς. *The life of* Socrates

crates *was a life of prayer*, Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 30. And hence it was, that they did generally aſcribe their laws to thoſe gods from whom they received their oracles; the *Cretans*, *Romans*, &c. not more confidently believing that they received their laws from *Minus*, *Numa Pompilius*, &c. than that theſe received them from *Jove*, *Ægeria*, and other gods. And I wonder not, that *Cicero* ſhould ſomewhere ſay, *Nunquam vir magnus ſine divino afflatu, That there never was a great man who enjoyed not ſome divine impulſe*; ſince it did ſo generally obtain through the *Pagan* world, to attribute all the ſurprizing excellencies, or extraordinary exploits of their heroes and eminent men to the immediate favour and patronage of their gods. Muſt *Veſpaſian* reſtore life to the expiring ſtate of *Rome?* Prodigies and miracles ſhall prepare his way; and the extraordinary marks of ſome divine aſſiſtance ſhall conſecrate and deſtine him to this great work. Muſt *Alexander* conquer the eaſtern world? Miracles ſhall attend his march, as it did that of *Moſes*, and the *Pamphilian* ſea retreat before the one, as the Red ſea did before the other: nor let any one think that this was uſual only amongſt the barbarous people; *Athens* itſelf, *Athens*, the very abode of wit and philoſophy, did attribute the perfections of *Eleuſinian Meleſagoras* and *Cretan Epimenides* to the inſtruction of ſome divine being; and thoſe of *Socrates* to his guardian angel, as well as the *Scythians* to thoſe of their *Zamolxis*; or they of *Proconeſus* thoſe of *Ariſteas*, to the peculiar favour and aſſiſt-

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ance of their gods. Nor ought it to ſeem ſtrange, that the works of *Heſiod*, *Homer*, or other poets, ſhould be aſcribed by the heathens to divine inſpiration; ſince thoſe of *Aholiab* and *Bezaleel* are by *Moſes* himſelf aſcrib'd to the Spirit of God: for the poems of the former could not but ſeem to the heathens as rich a piece of fancy, as the embroideries of the latter did to the *Jews*. And this puts me in mind of an excellent argument *Maximus Tyrius* makes uſe of to prove virtue derived from the aſſiſtance and bounty of God. *If arts* (ſaith he, *Diſſer.* 22.) *leſs excellent in their nature, and leſs uſeful in their end, be owing to God, how much more virtue, the divine guide and comfort of human life?* If there be no good that deſcends not from above, much leſs ſurely the chief and ſovereign good of man; ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδέν ἔϛιν ἀλλὸ ἀνθρωποῖς ἀγαθὸν ὃ μὴ παρὰ θεῶν ἔρχεται. Thus far I have proceeded to ſhew you what the heathens thought of the neceſſity of divine aſſiſtance, particularly in the attainment of virtue; for as to ſecular matters and temporal events, their ſenſe of the over-ruling power and influence of divine providence, was ſo notorious, that 'tis not to be call'd in queſtion: the being and providence of God ſeemed ſo inſeparable, that the *Epicurean*, who denied the latter, could never find belief when he profeſs'd himſelf to own the former: nay, even thoſe very men who could not be convinced of a providence by the bounty, were convinced of it by the ſeverity of God in his chaſtiſement of ſins. Hence that bold and briſk,

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tho' not very religious reflection of *Tacitus* (*Lib.* 1. *Hiſt.*) upon the miſeries the *Roman* empire ſuffered under *Galba*, *Otho* and *Vitellius*; *Nec enim unquam atrocioribus populi Romani cladibus, magiſve juſtis judiciis approbatum eſt: non eſſe curæ diis ſecuritatem noſtram, eſſe ultionem: The juſtice and the greatneſs of our plague abundantly evince the gods concerned, tho' not for our proſperity, yet for our puniſhment.* Such is man's diſingenuous temper, that he is more eaſily convinced by the wideneſs and fatality of a wound, that it was inflicted by an almighty arm, than he is by the greatneſs of the benefits he receives, that they are diſtributed by a divine munificence, tho' the number and infinite value of the goodneſs we receive, be in itſelf a much clearer proof of a divine providence, than the evils we ſuffer can be. There needs nothing to be ſaid to convince you what the heathens thought of providence with reſpect to outward and temporal things; nor is it, I think, now to be queſtioned, whether it were their opinion, that the divine aſſiſtance was neceſſary to the attainment of virtue and happineſs; nor would I add a word more, but that the words of *Hierocles* on this ſubject carry in them not only ſo full a conviction, but alſo ſo extraordinary a reliſh of a wiſe and religious humility, that I cannot prevail with myſelf to paſs them by; that is, *We need no motive or incentive to vice but our own inclinations: but to make us virtuous, we ſtand in need*

Καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ παντὸς ἀρχῆς, ὅτι συντοπίσης, ὅτι ἑξοδίου κακοποιὸν αἰτίαν ἐνδιδύσης. Ἀγαθῶν δὲ δεῖ ἀρχῆς μάλιστα καὶ μόνης, ἧς τῶν μὲν κεχωρισμένης τῶν λογικῶν οὐσιῶν, οἷος ἔστιν ὁ ὑφ' ἡμῶν λόγος· τῶν δὲ συναρχούσης αὐταῖς ἅμα τῇ κατ' οὐσίαν ἐπαφῇ συδιαιρέσεως, οἵα ἐστὶν ἡ ὀρθὴ λόγος. Hieroc. in Pythag. Aur. Carm.

need of the aid of God, joined with that of reaſon.

And this opinion of the neceſſity of God's aſſiſtance ſprung not only from the experience of the weakneſs and corruption of human nature, but alſo of the power and goodneſs of the divine nature; for I cannot think that the order, beauty and greatneſs of the creation, the fixt and conſtant returns of fruitful ſeaſons, *the filling mens hearts with food and gladneſs*, were the only teſtimonies which God gave the *Gentiles* of himſelf and his care for mankind: when I read that angels are the miniſtring ſpirits of God; when I read in *Daniel*, of the princes of *Græcia* and *Perſia* and find that provinces were committed to angels as the vice-roys and lieutenants of God, I cannot think that thoſe devout and charitable ſpirits did with leſs zeal in their provinces, labour to promote the honour of God and the good of man, than evil ſpirits did the diſhonour of the one and the ruin of the other: and unleſs the frequent appearances of angels in the beginning had poſſeſſed mens minds with a firm perſuaſion that there was a conſtant commerce maintained between heaven and earth; and that ſpirits very frequently did viſibly engage themſelves in the protection and aſſiſtance of men; I cannot as much as imagine what foundation there could be for the numerous impoſtures of oracles, or upon what ground the cuſtom of putting themſelves under the patronage of ſome tutelar ſpirit, could ſo generally have prevailed in the pagan world; without this ſuperſtition, the poetry of *Homer* had

had been ſo far from being entertained as ſacred and inſpired, that it had been univerſally contemned and diſliked as an idle rhapſody of unnatural, incredible, and fulſome characters of their gods. How could any man, who had never heard of the appearances of ſpirits, nay, who could not conceive any other notion of ſuch fancies than as ſomething abſurd and impoſſible, ever digeſt the groſs confidence of a poet bringing in a god upon the ſtage at every turn? I do not therefore doubt, but that the *Gentile* world received very many good offices and advantages from good angels, as well as ſuffer'd many miſchiefs from evil ones: and I think I might with good probability believe, that every good heathen as well as *Socrates*, had the aſſiſtance of a good ſpirit very frequently.

Nor was the miniſtry of angels the only aſſiſtance that God afforded the *Gentile* world, but in every age he raiſed up wiſe good and men to be his prophets or interpreters of nature's law to the *Gentiles:* I know St. *Auſtin* does, in two places at leaſt of his retractions, cenſure and condemn that charity which he had elſewhere expreſſed for the philoſophers or excellent men among the *Gentiles*; which is the more to be wondered at, ſince he ſo frequently acknowledges himſelf to have been firſt inflamed with the holy love of true philoſophy, by reading a piece of *Tully:* but were the matter to be carried by votes, I do not queſtion but I could produce teſtimonies in favour of thoſe men, of ſuch, whoſe antiquity, learning, and

piety might more than balance the authority of St. *Auſtin*. 'Tis true their faith differed much from that of a *Chriſtian*; and no man, I think, in his wits, could expect it otherwiſe: for how vaſt is the diſtance between the light of nature and that of revelation? But if we look upon thoſe motives and principles to virtue by which they were acted, they were ſuch as a Chriſtian need not bluſh at, or be aſham'd of: they look'd upon it, not only as the perfection of human nature, the bond and ſupport of ſociety, the delight, guide and comfort of every particular man's life; but alſo as the image of God, that which did render us like him, and therefore acceptable to him; as the only thing that could unite man to God, that could raiſe man above the bodily pollutions of ſenſuality, that could enable him to outbrave the fears of fortune and death, as that which could fit him for the converſation of heaven; and laſtly, they look'd upon it as the gift of God.

The idolatry of the philoſophers diſtinguiſh'd from the vulgar.

'Tis true, together with all this, you'll ſay, they were idolaters; I do not queſtion but they did often partake in the pollution of the idolatrous multitude. But if we regard the idolatry of their religion, and compare it with that of the heathen multitude, there was a vaſt difference between both; and that in theſe three points; the object, the acts of worſhip, and the effects of it.

As to the *object*, the philoſophers, 'tis true, did worſhip ſpirits, but good ones; the multitude did worſhip devils: how contradictory are thoſe

thoſe characters which the ſenſual infatuated multitude beſtow'd upon their idols, and thoſe, by which the philoſophers deſcribe the nature of their gods, or their *Genii?* Luſt and cruelty make up the one; purity, goodneſs, and chaſtity the other: this needs no proof; 'tis evident from almoſt all the writings of *ancient philoſophy* that are extant. Yet, I think, it cannot ſeem ſuperfluous to produce one teſtimony containing an account of the nature of their *Genii* or *guardian angels*; by which it will be eaſy to conclude, what notion they had of thoſe ſuperior ſpirits whom they ſuppoſed to dwell always in heaven in the preſence of the ſupreme God; and whom, tho' they called them gods, they thought infinitely inferior to that one God, their Creator and ours; but yet much ſuperior as well in the excellency of their nature, as dignity of their place, to thoſe angels which they looked upon as the meſſengers and miniſters of God to man; and as the guardians of man, and the interpreters or conveyers of his requeſts to God. Theſe are thus deſcribed by *Apuleius*; the ſubſtance of all which is, This our truly guardian-angel our immediate ſuper-intendent, the domeſtick ſpy of all our actions, the conſcious witneſs of our deſires and thoughts, the approver and encourager of our virtue, and the hater and diſcourager of our vice; if he be heedfully minded by us, rightly known and

Hic quem dico prorſus cuſtos, ſingularis præfectus, domeſticus ſpeculator, proprius curator, intimus cognator, aſſiduus obſervator, individuus arbiter, inſeparabilis teſtis, malorum improbator, bonorum probator, ſi ritè animadvertatur, ſeduló cognoſcatur, religioſè cola-

tur, ita ut à Socrate justitia & innocentia cultus est, in rebus incertis prospector, dubiis præmonitor, periculosis tutator, egenis opitulator; qui tibi queat tum in somniis, tum in signis, tum etiam fortasse eorum, cùm usus postulat, mala averruncare, bona prosperare, humilia sublimare, nutantia sulcire, obscurare clarare secunda regere, adversa corrigere. *Apul. de Deo Socrat. p.* 68.

religiously worshipped with righteousness and innocence, as he was by *Socrates*, will be our counsel in doubtful, our guard in hazardous affairs, *&c.* But all this while they were idolaters. Admit all this: if they were damn'd for this idolatry, good God! what will become of that great part of the church, whose practice at this day is infinitely more inexcusable than theirs was? Because God has publickly declar'd, that he has appointed one Mediator, thro' whom he wills us to approach him. There was then room for the plea of humility; but now a pretence of humility, what can it be in reality, but wanton fondness, or presumptuous wilfulness?

Thus widely did the virtuous and understanding part of mankind differ in the object of worship from the sensual and stupid herd. And since the manner of worship is naturally deriv'd from the notions men entertain of that Being which is the object of it; it could not be otherwise, but that they must differ as widely in the essential parts of worship, as they did in the objects of it. Hence it was, that whilst the people offered to their gods their lusts and passions, and sacrific'd to them in uncleanness or cruelty, the philosophers thought that nothing could be so welcome a sacrifice to theirs, as the imitation of their purity and goodness, holy af-

affections and good works. From both these differences there followed a

Third, consisting in the different effects which the religion of the one, and the other did produce: the idolatry of the one (as wickedness always will) utterly estranged them more and more from the service of God; the idolatry of the other (for so I call it to avoid dispute) seemed to unite them more and more to him, since they looked upon the spirits they worshipped, not only as the creatures, but most lively images of the true God; and acknowledged, that all good gifts proceeded from him, though they received 'em by the ministry and mediation of angels; and that virtue, which they looked upon as the only grateful worship of God, did exalt their minds; and by rendering them more like him, must needs render them more near to him. Thus they talked; whether thus they lived or no, is not very material to my present purpose: for after all, tho' their lives should not have come up to their philosophy, these their discourses could not chuse but be some way serviceable to mankind, being a manifest reproof to the stupid idolatry, to the brutish and barbarous worship which then prevailed in the world. These doctrines could not but manifestly tend to convince the world of the being and nature of the supreme God; they could not but tend to restore the law of nature to its just authority, and present the corrupt and degenerate world with a natural, that is, a lovely idea of virtue; and give 'em a just sense of the obligation they lay under, and of the sanctions by

which God eſtabliſh'd that law which he writ in the minds of men. Who ſees not now, that God by raiſing up ſuch men, and by aſſiſting them with a ſpirit of wiſdom and a ſpirit of courage, which the conſtancy of a great many of them in ſuffering for theſe truths, and the luſtre and beauty of their writings in thoſe dark times abundantly teſtify, was an undoubted proof of God's goodneſs to the *Gentiles*, and of his concern for their true intereſt and happineſs? Why ſhould not this light, which God lent the then wandering benighted part of mankind, be as kindly interpreted by man as it was deſign'd by God? Why ſhould not the philoſophers of the *Gentiles* be looked upon as prieſts and prophets well enough ſuited to the œconomy of the law of nature? Very excellent uſe have Chriſtians, even the moſt learned and pious, made of them; and ſurely they ought to have proved as much more beneficial to the world they liv'd in, as they were then more neceſſary.

I think, I have by this time ſaid enough, not only to extinguiſh in any man all ſuperſtitious fears, and unworthy apprehenſions of the divine majeſty, but alſo to enkindle in him a grateful love of God, and chearful hopes of true happineſs, by eſtabliſhing this perſuaſion upon unſhaken foundations: that God is a good and gracious God: that he is always ready to further and aſſiſt every man in his endeavours after happineſs. But now let not that doctrine be perverted to the betraying of us into ſloth, which was deſign'd to inſpire the mind with a freſh vigour, to quicken and confirm us in an induſtrious purſuit

ſuit after our true happineſs: for we muſt remember, that God is not only good and gracious, but alſo

Holy too: I ſhall not inſiſt long on this point, becauſe I think 'tis already proved; holineſs being as neceſſarily imply'd in perfection, as love of goodneſs. I know ſome have talked, as if God were a mere arbitrary Being, as if his laws were not the image or expreſſion of his nature, but merely the poſitive precepts of an arbitrary will. If any man can be ſo ſenſeleſs, as to believe that the moſt perfect Being can love or hate without any reaſon for't; or that all the laws and actions of God ſhall be conſonant to the ſtricteſt rules of juſtice and goodneſs, and all this by chance; for mere arbitrary motion is blind and unguided: ſuch a one ſeems to me as uncapable as he is unworthy of inſtruction: I can as ſoon believe lightning and thunder, wind and ſtorm a God, as believe him to be a mere arbitrary Being. The heathens believ'd a God, *Proteus*, that could turn himſelf into all ſhapes: but theſe men believe what is infinitely more abſurd, a God not of various and uncertain ſhapes only, but alſo of an unfixed, uncertain, indetermin'd nature: for the will muſt always be agreeable and conſonant to the nature of that being whoſe will it is. Thus liberty and indetermination of will in man proceeds from ſome contrariety in the principles which conſtitute him: unſteady judgment produces unſteady will, and brutiſh nature brutiſh will or inclination. If we conſult the ſcriptures, nothing is more evi-

Sect. 2. Holineſs of God.

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dent than the ſanctity of the divine nature: we are there exhorted *to walk in the light, becauſe God is light*; *and to be holy, becauſe he is holy*; which holineſs doth not regard the declaration of his will, but his nature; this being given us as a motive to oblige us to walk according to his righteous precepts: becauſe this alone is that which can pleaſe a righteous God, this alone is that which can make us like and dear to him: from that attribute of God, that is, holineſs, we may plainly infer,

Firſt, That we are not to expect any aſſiſtance from him, but then, when that which we enterprize is juſt and lawful, and we ourſelves are not wanting to ourſelves: for 'tis inconſiſtent with the holineſs of God to make his providence the refuge of lazineſs or impiety. Ἀρετῆς γὰρ ἔλπις ὁ Θεὸς ἔϛιν, ϗ δειλίας πρόφασις, *God is the hope of virtue, not the excuſe of ſloth, and cowardice.* (Plutarch *de ſuperſtitione.*) 'Tis a rational and well-weighed prayer which *Joſephus* puts into the mouth of *Moſes*, ſtanding on the ſhore of the Red-ſea; inacceſſible rocks and mountains denied the *Iſraelites* paſſage one way, the numerous hoſt of the *Egyptians* had fill'd all others: before them was the Red-ſea, whoſe waves threatened as certain and more dreadful a deſtruction than the ſword of the *Egyptians*; there was no weapon for fight, no proviſion for a camp, no place for flight. In this caſe *Moſes* prays thus. ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ϗ ἐ αγνοεῖς, &c. *Lord, thou knoweſt that no contrivance, induſtry, or force of ours can here avail us; 'tis in thee alone to find out a way to the reſcue*

of

of this people, who by thy command and under thy conduct have left Egypt: *deſpairing of all other ways we flee to thee alone for ſuccour: Lord, let it come ſpeedily; give us a clear proof of thy divine omnipotence and faithfulneſs; we are in great ſtraits, great to us, but ſlight and inconſiderable to thee. The ſea is thine, and it ſtops our progreſs; the mountains that ſhut us up, are thine; thou canſt divide this ſea, or turn its waves into firm land, and make us find a ſafe paſſage through the devouring deep: or, if thou thinkeſt fit, thou canſt make us march in triumph aloft through the open ſky.* This was a noble faith; this was indeed an expectation almoſt as wonderful as the ſucceſs it met with: but then, it was no leſs rational than ſucceſsful; their condition was capable of no deliverance but a miraculous one; and it was their obedience to the divine commands had reduced them to this condition. This is a ſafe rule to guide our faith and reliance by; in all our diſtreſſes and difficulties we muſt have recourſe unto God; for thoſe are the times wherein human infirmity requires the ſupport and comfort of divine aſſiſtance; the utmoſt ſtrength and perfection of virtue is too weak to bear the ſhock and brunt of calamity alone, ἔνθα δεῖ αὐτὴ Θεῷ συλλήπτορος καὶ συναγωνιςῷ καὶ παραςάτυ; *It muſt be reinforced by power from above,* (Max. Tyr. *Diſſert.* 26.) But then theſe difficulties muſt be ſuch to which our vice has not betray'd us; and our own courage and induſtry muſt be as vigorous as our prayers: for in vain do we beg new ſupplies of ſtrength, if

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we uſe not what we enjoyed before. Divine bounty doth never ſuperſede man's induſtry; fruitful ſhowers and enlivening rays do not prevent, but ſecond the labours of the huſbandman: God obſerves the ſame method in the production of a nobler ſort of fruit, wiſdom and virtue; the ſoul, as well as the field of the ſluggard, ſhall be over-run with weeds; there only ſhall the divine fruit of philoſophy and happineſs grow, where religious diſcipline tills the ground, and wakeful ſtudy ſows the ſeeds of thriving truths among the furrows. Accordingly, if we conſider the lives and practice of excellent men, none were ever ſo much favourites of heaven, that its gifts grew up in 'em, like corn and wine in the golden age, without culture and dreſſing: Inſpiration itſelf did not exempt man from the neceſſity of induſtry, but oblige him to a greater; thus under the Old Teſtament a prophetick life was a life of a greater ſtrictneſs and retirement than that of others; and in the new, not to mention the watchings, the faſtings, the retirements, the prayers of our Lord and Maſter, that account of himſelf which St. *Paul* gives us, will inform us, not only what his life was, but what it was expected the life of every one ſhould be that ſhared with him in the miniſtry and dignity of an apoſtle. *But in all things approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes,——in labours, in watchings; by pureneſs, by knowledge,* 2 Cor. vi. Amongſt the heathens, whatever perfection and excellency they attributed to human nature,

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whatever they attributed to an εὐφυία, a contexture and frame of nature more than common; whatever, laſtly, they attributed to the favour, the extraordinary favour of God; yet did they always judge a ſtrict life and indefatigable induſtry neceſſary to the acquiring of true philoſophy and happineſs: their *Pythagoras*, ſo dear to their gods, that it ſeemed to be a doubt amongſt them, whether he were not himſelf a God incarnate; not content to have been the ſcholar firſt of *Pherecydes*, *Syrus*, and afterwards *Hermodamas*, travelled firſt into *Egypt*, and afterwards to *Babylon* and I know not whither, purſuing wiſdom and happineſs with great induſtry, and as great abſtinence. *Socrates*, however inſpir'd by his genius, did yet learn muſick of *Comus*, poetry of *Evenus*, agriculture of *Iſchomachus*, geometry of *Theodorus*, &c. And to all this he added the religious diſcipline of mortification, even to a *voluntary poverty*. What ſhould I multiply inſtances? there is not a man amongſt the *Gentiles* remarkable for wiſdom or virtue, that is not as remarkable for that travail and ſelf-denial, by which he purchaſed both: I add ſelf-denial, induſtry alone being not judg'd ſufficient: for,

Secondly, 'Tis eaſy in the next place to infer from the ſanctity of God, that they who expect his aſſiſtance, ſhould endeavour to be good and holy: 'tis virtue that conſtitutes a man a ſubject of the heavenly kingdom, and a favourite of God; and therefore 'tis this that gives him the beſt claim to his protection and patronage: vice is a ſtate of rebellion and defiance againſt God,

God, and he that has put off his allegiance, cannot expect rationally the benefits of that government which he refuſes to be under. 'Tis true, the infinite goodneſs and clemency of God which is not eaſily vanquiſh'd by man's ingratitude, may purſue ſuch a man with repeated overtures and tenders of grace and pardon, and may leave him in the poſſeſſion of common benefits, ſuch as health, plenty, friends, *&c.* but God will never confer upon him the moſt excellent gifts, the marks of his ſpecial preſence and particular favour: he will withdraw from him the aids of his Spirit, and leave him to himſelf, a blind, indigent, and forlorn creature: *The holy Spirit of diſcipline will fly deceit, and will not abide when unrighteouſneſs comes in*, Wiſd. i. Which is nothing more than that the heathen by the light of nature did affirm concerning his *Genius*, ἐὰν δὲ πᾶ μοχθηρὰν δείξῃς ψυχὴν, ἀνέστω αὕτη καὶ ἀνεπισατήτω, *Wicked ſouls have no good angels ſojourneying with them, or preſiding over them.* (Max. Tyr. *Diſſert.* 26.) Our ſouls, like temples, muſt be prepared and conſecrated to him, if we would have God dwell in them. Righteouſneſs and holineſs are the only things that charm and captivate God; nothing elſe can invite him to dwell with man. This very reaſon *Maximus Tyrius* aſſigns for the reſidence and abode of a *Dæmon* with *Socrates* after ſo extraordinary a manner. *Doſt thou wonder that a prophetick ſpirit ſhould dwell with* Socrates *ſo intimately united, ſo friendly, ſo inſeparable, that he ſeemed only*

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not mixt, and become one with his own mind? with Socrates, *whoſe purity of body, charity, and goodneſs of ſoul, ſtrictneſs of converſation, depth of judgment, melody and perſuaſiveneſs of ſpeech, religion towards God and integrity towards man, render'd him worthy of ſuch a gueſt, ſuch a friend?* From all which it is evident,

Θεοι μάζεις οἱ Σωκράτη σοῖν Δαιμόνιον φίλον, μαντικὸν, διὰ παρειμένων, ἢ εἶναι χι τῇ γνώμῃ αὐτῷ ἀναπεπομένον, ἀνδρὶ καθαρῷ μὲν τὸ σῶμα, ἀγαθῷ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀπριβεῖ δὲ τὸν διαιτὸν, διοῖ δὲ ὁμιλῖν, μουσικῷ δὲ εἰπεῖν εἰς δὲ τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβεῖ εἶναι δὲ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα· Idem. ib.

Thirdly, What different rates we are to ſet upon the different gifts of God: *Every good gift, and every perfect gift comes down from above*, James i. But every gift is not equally good, equally perfect; being neither equally neceſſary, nor profitable. Wealth, power, friends, relations, health, ſtrength, beauty, wit, diſcretion, virtue, are all good, but not all equal; their value is different, and therefore the degrees of our importunity, and of our faith or reliance upon God, muſt be proportion'd accordingly: a confident faith, and an almoſt impatient zeal, doth well become us, when we ſeek the kingdom of heaven and the righteouſneſs thereof; when we ſeek of God the divine gifts of wiſdom and virtue; but an humble modeſty, and a moſt profound ſubmiſſion, is the ornament and beauty of thoſe who are petitioners for inferior temporal bleſſings: for God has promis'd the former to all that earneſtly ſue for them, peremptorily and without any tacit reſervations: but his promiſes of the latter do always imply this condition, *If they ſhall be for our good:* for the perfections of the mind are moral and immutable beauties; but

thoſe

thoſe of the body, and all the gaudy things of fortune, are like the fading beauties of a flower, the heat ſcorches it, the cold nips it, every little chance cracks the ſtalk, and the hand of a child will ſerve to crop it. Nothing therefore is more acceptable to God, than the modeſty of our petitions for *theſe* good things, and the fervency of them for the *other*; nothing more delightful to him, unleſs the granting of them. The things therefore that we are to beg of God, not only with the greateſt importunity, but alſo in the firſt place, are thoſe which *Maximus Tyrius*, *Diſſert.* 30. thought the ſubject of *Socrates*'s prayers: *What are theſe? A virtuous mind, a quiet ſtate, an unblameable life, and a chearful death, full of good hopes. Theſe were the matters of his requeſts; not wealth, or honour, or popularity.* This at once brings to my thoughts another objection rais'd againſt the poſſibility of attaining happineſs, and inſtructs me how to anſwer it.

Ἢ οὐχὶ τοῦτο εὔχετο ὁ Σωκράτης ὅταν αὐτῷ χρήματα γένοιτο, ἢ ὅπως ἔχοι Ἀθηναίων, — ἀλλ' εὔχετο μὲν τοῖς Θεοῖς.— Δέεσθαι ψυχῆς καὶ ἡσυχίας βίου, καὶ ζωὴν ἀμεμπτὸν, καὶ εὔκλειαν θάνατον.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the influence of fortune on our happineſs.

The independence of our happineſs on fortune already cleared: and why, further conſidered. Fortune, what; how far its ſway extends. Fortune pretended neceſſary to remove the impediments of virtue. Every man the architect of his own fortune. Fondneſs for the world ſprings from infidelity and ſenſuality, and the folly of both. Competency, what; and the uſe of it with reference to our happineſs. The tendency of wealth examined, with reference to the mind, the body, the outward ſtate of man. The admiration of wealth ariſes from falſe and gaudy appearances.

A *Second* thing which men charge with the guilt of their ruin, is *fortune*. I might paſs over this point ſlightly; becauſe afflictions will come more properly to be conſidered in that part, where I treat of *indolence*: and becauſe I have already cleared two great truths, which are of themſelves abundantly ſufficient to baffle and defeat this trifling objection; namely; *Firſt*, That virtue and vice, wiſdom and folly, are the things to which, generally ſpeaking, we owe our *temporal proſperity* or *adverſity*; and conſequently that thoſe, ſuppoſing the ordinary aſſiſtance of God being in our power, theſe muſt be ſo too. *Secondly*, That

we are assured of the assistance of God, even in these things, as far as he shall see them truly subservient to our good; however, because the persuasion of the usefulness, nay, absolute necessity of the favour of fortune, has taken such deep root in the minds of men, that it would be thought little less than a contradiction, to imagine that a man can be *unfortunate and happy* (so that even *Seneca* himself has let fall one of the greatest paradoxes a *Stoic* was ever guilty of) such an expression as this better becoming the mouth of a peasant than a philosopher: *That not only beginners, but proficients in virtue, till they have put off mortality, will stand in need of some indulgence of fortune.* And few men find any belief with the world, when they talk of the contempt of wealth, it being generally interpreted either in the laziness of an unactive and degenerous mind, or the dissimulation of one who affects to be thought to defy fortune, while he doth secretly and inwardly repine and fret at the neglect and coldness she expresses towards him. I will therefore bestow a little time on the consideration of this objection.

Sed ei qui ad virtutem tendit, etiamsi multum processit, opus est tamen aliqua fortunæ indulgentia, adhuc inter humana luctanti, dum nodum illum exolvit, & omne vinculum mortale. *Seneca de vit. beata.*

What dost thou mean by fortune? if mere chance, then to envy the lot of others, or murmur at thy own, is folly; if providence, then it is impiety; for whatever goodness, guided by unerring wisdom, doth, must be so well done that it cannot be

Fortune, what.

be mended; and whatever is merely in the power of a blind, giddy, and inconſtant humour (which is the notion by which men chuſe to expreſs fortune) can neither be prevented, fixed nor regulated. But what is it, *Secondly*, thou doſt put in the power of fortune? the underſtanding and liberty of mens minds; wiſdom, temperance, induſtry, courage, and in one word, virtue? If thou doſt not, ſhe has no influence on thy happineſs, ſhe cannot prevent thy attainment of it, nor bereave thee of it when attained: If thou doſt, thou doſt enlarge the empire of fortune too too far; let her rule and inſult over ſoldiers, courtiers, lovers, factious demagogues and time-ſervers, but not over philoſophers: let thoſe who are her minions, be her ſlaves; let her diſpoſe of money, lands, farms, commiſſions, benefices, honours, graces, fame: nay, if you will, crowns and ſcepters too: virtue and happineſs and ſouls, are too precious commodities to be the ſport and traffick of fortune. *Solomon* obſerved long ago, *Wiſdom cries out, ſhe uttereth her voice in the ſtreets; ſhe cries out in the chief place of concourſe, in the openings of the gates; in the city ſhe utters her words*, Prov. i. Our Saviour in the great day of the feaſt cried, ſaying, *If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink*; John vii. which is an invitation of the ſame nature with that of the prophet, *Every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money, and*

How far its power extends.

without price, Isa. v. This ever was, and ever will be true; a great fortune is not necessary for the attainment of faith, hope, or charity: and he that is endow'd with these, can't be miserable; you may learn the whole system of divine and important truths; you may acquit yourself with all the beauty and enjoyments of virtue at a very cheap rate; and you may learn temperance, fortitude justice, modesty, constancy, patience, contempt of the world, without the assistance of much more wealth than will serve to feed and clothe you: and canst thou not be content with these possessions? is not this a sort of merchandize to be preferred before that of fine gold?

Fortune pretended necessary to remove the impediments of virtue.

I Know, the greater part of those who accuse their fortune of misery, do at least pretend that their condition and circumstances of life are so incommodious, that they have not time to attend to the great interest of the soul, or at least not with that application which they should. Alas, thus not the mean only, but almost all talk, from the porter to the prince: the circumstances of one are too strait, too narrow; of another too full of trouble, because too full of state: one complains that he is withdrawn from his great end, by the many allurements and sensual temptations to which his rank and quality in the world exposes him; another, that he is daily fretted and indispos'd by the little cross accidents, and the rugged conversation which he is necessarily obliged to bear with: one complains of too much business, another of too little; the hurry and multitude of things distracts the one,

infidel

infidel fears and anxious deſpondencies the other: one complains that his acquaintances and friends are too numerous, and intrench too far upon his precious hours: another is querulous, melancholy, and peeviſh, becauſe he looks upon himſelf either for his meanneſs neglected, or for his misfortune deſerted and forſaken: company is burdenſome to the one, and ſolitude to the other. Thus all conditions are full of complaints, from him that trudges on his clouted ſhoe, to him who can ſcarce mention the manners or the fortunes of the multitude, without ſome expreſſions of contumely and diſdain. Thou fool, doſt thou not ſee that all theſe complaints are idle contradictions? for ſhame correct the wantonneſs of thy humour, and thou wilt ſoon correct thy fortune: learn to be happy in every ſtate, and every place: learn to enjoy thyſelf, to know and value the wealth that is in thine own power, I mean wiſdom and goodneſs: learn to aſſert the ſovereignty and dignity of thy ſoul. Methinks that if philoſophy could not, pride and indignation might conquer fortune: 'tis beneath the dignity of a ſoul that has but a grain of ſenſe, to make chance, and winds, and waves, the arbitrary diſpoſers of his happineſs; or what is worſe, to depend upon ſome muſhroom upſtart, which a chance ſmile raiſed out of its turf and rottenneſs, to a condition of which his mean ſoul is ſo unequal, that he himſelf fears and wonders at his own height. O how I hug the memory of thoſe honeſt heathens, who in a ragged gown, and homely cottage, bade defiance to fortune, and laugh'd at thoſe pains and hazards the vanity

and pride of men, not their misfortune, drove them to! Men may call this pride, or ſpite in *them*; as the beg arly rabble doth uſually envy the fortune it doth deſpair of: but there were a great many of theſe who laid by envy'd greatneſs, to enjoy this quiet, tho' generally deſpicable meanneſs: but let the contempt of the world be what it will in a heathen; let it be pride or peeviſhneſs, vain-glory, or any thing, rather than a reproach to Chriſtians; what ſay you to the followers of our Lord and Maſter? *Then, ſaid* Peter, *ſilver and gold I have none*, Acts iii. None? what haſt thou then, thou poor diſciple of a poor maſter? a true faith, a godlike charity, and unſhaken hope: bleſſed art thou amongſt men, nothing can make thee greater, nothing richer, nothing happier, but heaven. You ſee plainly then, a man may be virtuous, tho' not wealthy; and that fortune, which prevents his being rich, cannot prevent his being happy.

This diſcourſe will never down; this is not calculated for this age: philoſophy muſt be a little more mannerly, and religion a little more genteel and complaiſant than formerly, ere it can be adapted and accommodated to the preſent ſtate of things. Go on then, let us try how far it will be neceſſary to condeſcend. You cannot be happy; why? becauſe you are not *rich*; go then to God, and beg you may be *rich*; I have not the face to put up ſuch arrogant and intemperate requeſts to God: 'tis plain then, 'tis not neceſſary to be *rich* in order to be happy: for whatever is neceſſary to this, thou may'ſt

may'ſt with good aſſurance beg of God. But thy deſires are more humble and modeſt; thou aimeſt at nothing but what is very neceſſary; a fairer houſe, another ſervant, a diſh or two of meat more for thy friends, a coach for thy convenience or eaſe, and a few hundred pounds apiece more for thy children: O heavenly ingredients of a rational pleaſure! O divine inſtruments of human happineſs! O the humble and mortify'd requeſts of modeſt ſouls! Well, if theſe things be ſo neceſſary, and theſe deſires be ſo decent and virtuous, if thou canſt not be happy, and conſequently muſt be miſerable, without them: put up a bill, repreſent thy condition in it; ſuch a one wants a more commodious houſe, more ſervants, more diſhes, *&c.* and deſires the prayers of the congregation for ſupport under this affliction. You are profane: far be it from me; I would only let thee ſee the wantonneſs of thy deſires. If thou think'ſt this would expoſe thee to publick laughter, go to thy miniſter, unfold thy caſe to him, let him pray for thee; he is a good man, and his prayers will go far; you rally and ridicule me. Enter then into thy cloſet, ſhut thy door, thou may'ſt truſt God, he pities and conſiders even human infirmities; I could even almoſt *in my mind* deſire it of him; but I am aſham'd to do it in a *ſet* and *ſolemn prayer*. I could almoſt make the petition in the *groſs*, but I bluſh to think of deſcending to *particulars*. Well, then I ſee plainly, that wealth in any degree of it, is ſo far from being neceſſary to our happineſs, that it has ſo little of uſefulneſs or conveniency in it,

that in thy conſcience between God and thee, thou canſt not think fit to complain of the want of it.

Every man the architect of his own fortune.

But this anſwer will never ſatisfy him who complains of want, or of being engaged in continual troubles, and toſſed by the daily changes and revolutions of the world. I confeſs, it will not: but I muſt tell ſuch a one if *Solomon*'s obſervation be true, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich*, Prov. x. and that other, *Seeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs, he ſhall ſtand before kings, he ſhall not ſtand before mean men*, Prov. xxii. Then his poverty is his crime, as well as his calamity; he muſt redeem himſelf from this his puniſhment by induſtry and prayer. As to calamities, this muſt be acknowledged, that the mind of a good and great man, which ſtands firm upon its own *baſis*, a good God, a good Saviour, and a good conſcience, may remain unmov'd, when the earth trembles, and the ſea roars round about him. Chances indeed befal things temporal; but he leans not upon them. I may ſay farther, that he, who upon mature deliberation, and upon neceſſary obligations of duty engages himſelf in a juſt cauſe, may be unfortunate, but he cannot be miſerable: his ſufferings carry a ſecret pleaſure in them, and his misfortunes are full of hope and glory; if he conſider, if he reflect, if he do not feed on vain and airy projects, and ſuffer himſelf to be unwarily tranſported by very irrational, though ſeemingly juſt paſſions. I muſt laſtly add, that 'tis not the neceſſity of their affairs,

affairs, nor the iniquity of times, which doth commonly involve and intangle men in publick or private calamities, but ſome ſecret vanity, ſome blind impetuous paſſion, ſome ill-laid project, or ſome treacherous or diſhonourable fear. The ſtate of *Rome* never felt more or greater changes than in the life of *Atticus*, as is obvious to any one who ſhall reflect upon the hiſtory of his time: and yet in all the turns and mighty changes of fortune, *Atticus* enjoyed a conſtant tranquillity and well ſettled peace, being ſcarce ever reduced to the neceſſity of a retirement but once, as I remember. Nor was it the meanneſs of his quality, or the narrowneſs of his fortune that ſecured him; he was a man great in both: nor was it the ſecrecy of a private life, or the ſluggiſhneſs of a ſtupid mind, which rendered him unworthy of any man's fear, and unable to provoke a danger. No, he was a man, as well for the eminence of his parts, and vigour of his mind, as for the largeneſs of his fortune, well known to the greateſt and moſt active men of all parties; and yet ſteering his life by the rules of virtue and true wiſdom, he lived untouch'd by, unconcerned in, the ſtrange alterations of ſo long a life as his: which were ſuch, and ſo many, that the hiſtorian has obſerved, that they, who were one day in the height of power and honour, were the next in the gulph of danger and deſpair: ſo that his remark is generally very true, *Sui cuique mores fingunt fortunam. Every man may faſhion and ſhape his fortune as he will his manners.* (Corn. Nep. *in vita Attici.*)

Nor

Nor was the ſucceſs of his behaviour leſs in private than in publick: for *Cornelius Nepos* has obſerved in his life, that thoſe friendſhips he entered into, he was very happy and conſtant in; nay, ſuch was the gentleneſs, ſuch the diſcretion of his behaviour, that it preſerved him in the favour of an uncle (I think) of his, who was ſo ſour and peeviſh, that none could pleaſe him; ſuch a *Nabal*, a man could not ſpeak to him: nay, he not only kept in with him, but poſſeſſed him him ſo entirely, that he was left his heir. Nor was all this in *Atticus*, the effect of temper or nature, but of virtue: *Neque id fecit natura ſolum, quanquam omnes ei paremus, ſed etiam doctrina; nam & principium philoſophorum ita percepta habuit præcepta, ut iis ad vitam agendam, non ad oſtentationem, utebatur:* (Ibid.) *For he had ſtudied philoſophy, not for oſtentation, but the conduct of his life.* I might now preſume I had given ſatisfaction to this objection, eſpecially ſince I oblige myſelf to take the caſe of temporal and outward calamities into full conſideration hereafter; but the infection is got into the maſs of blood, and has diffuſed itſelf thro' mankind, and 'tis not a ſlight and weak medicine that can purge it out: therefore I have obſerved that the heathens were never more copious, or more vehement than in the refutation of this error. Our baptiſm doth ſcarce proclaim a more ſolemn war againſt the pomps and vanities of the world, than philoſophy did in all ages: no doubt therefore the expunging this fancy, which makes man's happineſs depend upon his fortune in the world,

muſt

muſt needs be a matter of great importance, ſince both revelation and reaſon have ſo earneſtly and ſolemnly endeavoured it; I ſhall not therefore, I hope, ſeem impertinent or tedious, if looking upon this objection as conſiderable, in *opinion*, tho' not in *itſelf*, I treat it with more reſpect and ſolemnity than it really deſerves.

My deſign therefore is to examine what real good or convenience there is in wealth, how valuable, or how neceſſary 'tis, and that not in a declamatory or ſophiſtical, but ſuch a ſober and rational manner, as may be ſatisfactory and convictive to every unprejudiced mind.

Firſt, therefore, I will give ſome account, whence 'tis that men are ſo intent upon their worldly intereſt, ſo wholly bent upon being rich.

Secondly, I will ſtate what is meant by a competency, and what the advantage and neceſſity of it is.

Thirdly, I will conſider what the natural tendency of wealth is. From all which it will eaſily appear, what connection and dependence there is between our fortune and our happineſs.

If we enquire whence 'tis men are ſo intent upon the world; one reaſon is a ſecret infidelity; men are deſirous to lay ſuch a foundation as time cannot wear, nor winds and tempeſts o'erthrow; they cannot truſt providence, till they ſee, or at leaſt, fancy themſelves in a condition to defy it: and this they look upon as a great piece of prudence, to provide for themſelves a ſafe retreat at once from the ſtorms and changes that generally purſue mankind, and the contempt

1. *Reaſon of love of the world, infidelity.*

contempt which unjuſtly purſues *thoſe* who are overtaken by them: I cannot tell which is the greater, the folly or the impiety of this humour; for 'tis a wretched folly to flatter ourſelves with the vain hopes of a ſecurity which is not to be found any where beneath heaven; or to imagine that a great eſtate is leſs liable to the blaſts of fortune, than a ſmall one; or to fancy that the contempt which attends thoſe who never riſe, is more inſupportable than that which attends thoſe who fall: nor is the impiety one jot leſs than the folly; for what can be more wicked than amidſt ſo many viſible and undeniable proofs and aſſurances of a God and providence, to let the ſame anxious and jealous fears fill and diſturb our minds, which would ſcarce be pardonable, if there were neither? What greater affront can we offer to the goodneſs, the wiſdom, the omnipotence and faithfulneſs of God, than to refuſe to repoſe the care, the truſt of providing for us upon him, when he not only offers, but preſſes himſelf upon the employment?

A *ſecond* cauſe why we ſo eagerly purſue wealth, is *ſenſuality*: being ſtrangers to the peace and joy of faith, inſenſible of the divine delight of charity, uncapable of the extaſies, of the full aſſurance of hope, and in general, of the rational pleaſures of a philoſophical mind; what can be expected but that both wind and tide ſhould drive us violently on another ſhore? I mean the whole force and inclination of our nature ſhould impetuouſly tend towards ſenſual, worldly pleaſures

2. *Senſuality.*

ſures and enjoyments, and conſequently towards wealth, as the neceſſary inſtrument of both. You grant therefore that wealth is neceſſary to a pleaſurable life? To a pleaſurable one 'tis, to a pleaſant one 'tis not. The ſenſual pleaſures of a ſenſual man, *i. e.* one who is all body and fancy, requires a good fund of wealth, but the temporal enjoyments of a virtuous man do not. I grant, that eaſe and reſt are neceſſary to the ſluggiſh, ſtate and height to the proud, variety to the intemperate and the wanton, and to all this wealth is neceſſary; but I deny, that ſloth or pride, intemperance (I will add niceneſs) or wantonneſs, is neceſſary to our happineſs: nay, I will confidently affirm, that a vigorous mind and active body, is a much greater pleaſure than ſluggiſh eaſe: that an humble, if contented, ſtate is much more eaſy than the proud grandeur, and the ἀλαζονεία, or *the oſtentation of life* in St. *John*; that ſober and thrifty temperance is a far greater pleaſure than variety; and the modeſty, conſtancy, and friendſhip of a virtuous affection, is not only a more calm, generous and ſteady, but a more tranſporting ſatisfaction, than the fanciful tumbles of a wandering luſt. And I hope, none will be ſo fond as to judge wealth neceſſary to the obtaining theſe virtues: if any are, their fillineſs and vanity are to be exploded and laught at, not ſeriouſly confuted; for who in his wits can believe, that eaſe is the beſt nurſe of induſtry: that affected ſtate and ambitious grandeur are the parents of humility and contentment; that affluence and daily delicacies are the moſt effectual inſtruments

of

of abſtinence, and that variety is the mother of chaſtity? If not, then 'tis apparent how far ſerviceable wealth is; for all that lies in its power is to provide for us theſe temptations: but tho' a wiſe and virtuous man wants no wealth, I deny not but that he needs a competency; what this is, is the next thing to be enquired: for this pretext of having what is enough, is frequently made uſe of to juſtify and legitimate avarice and ambition.

Sect. 2. *Competency.*

The meaſure of competency is the neceſſities of nature, not the extravagancies of fancy: a little heap where frugal temperance and humble induſtry are the ſtewards, is a plentiful proviſion; but where-ever waſteful luxury and wanton fancy rule and govern, plenty itſelf is a mere dearth. What treaſures would not the expenſive riots of *Apicius*, *Orata*, *Clodius* exhauſt? how ſmall a particle of which would have been ample revenues to *Curius*, *Æmilius Pappus*, or *Fabricius?* Competency then is that proviſion which the virtuous man needs as his *viaticum*, as the ſupport of life and inſtrument of virtue; the modeſt wiſh of *Jacob*, Gen xxviii. *Bread to eat, and raiment to put on.* The uſe and advantage of this, is not to keep us or our children from being expoſed to contempt (that is too ſlight an evil for a Chriſtian or philoſopher to dread) but to the barbarous pity or charity of rich and great friends. A ſecond uſe or advantage of it is, that it helps to keep the mind erect and free; that it puts us into a capacity of employing our reaſon, and en-

enjoying ourſelves our own way; and leave us not under any temptation to unmanly compliances, or unchriſtian jealouſies and fears: for he whoſe ambition goes not beyond this, will eaſily truſt providence, if he believe there be any; or his own induſtry if he believe none: how he that divides and ſeparates providence and induſtry, will thrive in this matter, I know not; but he that joins his own induſtry with God's bleſſing obtained by prayer, can never miſs of this his aim. Having proceeded thus far, I ſhall be more eaſily able to reſolve,

Thirdly, What the value, what the neceſſity of riches is. 'Tis a pretty ſpeech which *Plato* in *Stobæus* makes in his defence and commendation of wealth. But in the firſt place, I do not call every thing wealth, that is not mere beggary; I have allowed of a competency as very convenient even for a virtuous and wiſe man. In the next place, I trouble not myſelf about the grandeur or ſecurity of kingdoms, tho' peradventure the *Scythian poverty*, or *Roman* virtue, is a ſtronger bulwark, a better guard of theſe, than the riches of *Aſia*. And in the laſt place, I do not enquire what uſe wiſdom and virtue are able to make of wealth, which can extract pleaſure and happineſs even out of troubles and afflictions; but what the natural tendency of wealth is. Theſe things being obſerved, that, and all other diſcourſes of the like nature, will appear to contain very little of ſolid truth, and to have very little of weight in them: let us come to a trial

The tendency of wealth, with reference to the ſoul, Serm. 82. ex Telete.

trial of the matter. If contentment and security were the natural effects of wealth, if to be rich and to be happy were the same thing, then it were not to be wondered at, that wealth should be the great idol, and ambition of mankind: but if it neither free men from those passions of the mind, nor diseases of the body, nor other calamities which imbitter life to the inferior part of mankind; what then is the advantage of it? Let us then stand still and consider this: Do not hatred and anger, envy and anxiety, ambition and lust reign more frequently and more insolently in the bosom of the great and wealthy, than of the labouring cottager? Nay, I believe upon a narrow search we shall find, that some passions are the prerogative of a proud and insolent fortune, and are not incident to a mean one; such as haughty anger, irreconcileable hatred, and unlimited ambition, and an uneasy wantonness: the ploughman and the artist, the labourer and the hind, know none of these; ambition does not break their sleep, nor a fastidious niceness make 'em disgust and nauseate their best meals; nor are they troubled with wild and ungovernable lusts, bred by excess, and nurs'd by gaudy bravery, deluding arts, and more deluding fancy.

With reference to the body.

Nor are the rich more exempt from the diseases of the body, than from the passions of the mind; excessive meals, disorderly sleeps, much sloth and much wantonness, as they are the privileges of a gay fortune, so are they the sources of innumerable diseases: scurvies, gouts, rheumatisms,

matiſms, ſurfeits, putrid fevers, and I know not what, are the conſequences of proud idleneſs and exceſſive enjoyments, *i. e.* of ill-governed wealth: whereas a plain table and a ſober life, regular and cheap pleaſures, and moderate labour, beget and improve an entire habit of health, and prolong life to the utmoſt period of nature. This is a ſecond great advantage of wealth, that it gives us a diſeaſed body, and a ſhort life.

Sure then the rich are the minions of fortune: and the diſaſters which oppreſs the reſt of mankind, touch not them: on the quite contrary, all annals are ſtuffed with the calamities and misfortunes of theſe men; rifled wealth, defeated hopes, baffled ambition, blaſted honours, broken dejected power, and, in a word, mighty changes, are the argument of tragedies, and the ſubject of a loud and raving paſſion: whereas the ſtrokes of fortune are ſoft and gentle, when they light upon the mean; theſe are not capable of tragical alterations; their minds are of a ſtronger temper, their bodies firmer, their ſenſes not nice and delicate, and their little ſufferings draw not after them the mourning pomp and ſtate which attends the fall, I may call it the funeral of a great one. Here envy inſults not, malice traduces not, the petulant multitude do not follow the corps with confuſed clamours and cenſures; nor do acquaintance flock to expreſs outwardly a cold and formal regard, while they feel inwardly a ſecret joy; for that man's fall is always unpitied whoſe power was a barren and uſe-

With reference to man's outward ſtate.

leſs title. But to come cloſer yet: what is it that makes up the comfort of human life? A quiet ſtate, faithful friends, good wives and good children? If we conſider it, we ſhall find the life of man little beholden to wealth in theſe points: in all changes of time are not the rich the greateſt ſufferers? the mark of envy, the prey of violence and uſurpation? Have they not more enemies, as well as more friends, than other men? friends did I ſay? they have none. They have dependants, flatterers, companions, and miniſters of their pleaſures; no friends. Hence is it, that nothing is more common than for thoſe above us to wiſh for the content, the eaſe and enjoyment of thoſe below them: for the truth of it is (if we proceed) relations, which are the pleaſure of men of middle fortune, are the burthen and incumbrance of the rich and great: for in all their contracts and diſpoſals, they are ſervants to their fortune, not their inclination; marriages among theſe are the matches of eſtates, not minds; and therefore they attend not the temper or the honour of the families they link with; nay, what is worſe, they have no regard to their education or virtue, or wiſdom: but money weighs all down, whatever objections are put in the oppoſite ſcale: in the whole method of their lives they are ſlaves to their fortune, and to their reputation in the world, judging themſelves obliged to live, not according to their reaſon, but their quality and the humour, that is, the folly of the age, and of the acquaintance they converſe with: nor dare they walk by any other maxims in the

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government of the neareſt to them, or in the education of their children: in all theſe things they muſt do what becomes men of their figure in the world, not what becomes true wiſdom. Who ſees not now, that upon the whole there is in this ſtate or condition of life more incumbrance, and leſs true freedom? more ſhew and leſs enjoyment, than in any other?

The admiration of wealth whence.

If all this be true; you will be apt to conclude mankind is mad: if wealth neither makes us more wiſe nor more healthy, more free in ourſelves, nor more fortunate in our relations, what bewitches man into this extravagant dotage? What makes the world gaze upon, and envy the rich, as the only happy creatures? What makes us fawn upon them, and flatter them, as the only powerful and great things the world has? Something there is in it, and that is this; we ſee the outſide, the pomp and pageantry of wealth; we ſee the gilt coaches, the rich liveries, the little town of buildings, gay furniture, and a whole ſquadron of diſhes; and together with all this, the gawdy trappings the happy man's bedight with; the port, the grace, the confidence that all this gives to ignorance and nonſenſe: but if you'll conſider this truly, you will find all this mere pageantry and apparition, nothing ſolid nor real in it. As for gay cloathing, 'tis an advantage not worth the ſpeaking of, 'tis the pride of children, and the weakneſs of women: the little ſoul that converſes no higher than the looking-glaſs, and a fantaſtick dreſs, may help to make up the ſhew

of the world; but muſt not be reckon'd amongſt the rational inhabitants of it; ſerving only as painture, images and ornaments to the ſtage, not actors on it. As to all the reſt, they *ſeem* to enjoy ſome pre-eminence, but do not: the mean man eats his morſel with more pleaſure, becauſe more appetite; and ſleeps with more delight, becauſe with more eaſe, neither oppreſſed in body by luxury, nor in mind by care: *The ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not ſuffer him to ſleep*, Eccleſ. v. 12. All the reſt, as numerous attendants, many dependants, flocks of paraſites, and the like, are but mere incumbrance, the unwieldineſs of a groſs and heavy body. All theſe ſerve to increaſe the noiſe and hurry, the care and the pomp, but not the pleaſure or enjoyment of the wealthy: Hence was that obſervation of *Solomon: If riches increaſe, they are increaſed that eat them, and what profit has the owner thereof, ſaving the beholding of it with his eyes?* Ibid. A moſt extraordinary happineſs this, to be the hoſt of their neighbourhood, to have one's houſe the rendezvous of the idle and the gluttonous, of buffoons and flatterers; and yet, if the rich live otherwiſe, preſently they grow infamous and ſtink; they are looked upon as *Indian* graves, where wealth is not laid up, but loſt and buried; they are loaded with the curſes of ſome, with the hatred of others, and with the cenſures of all; and this is almoſt as bad as to be peſtered with impertinences and flattery. This is the whole of the matter; if people gaze

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and admire, 'tis their ignorance; if they fawn or flatter, 'tis their baſeneſs; but ſtill remember, 'tis the people, 'tis the crowd that doth this. Should a man of letters or ſpirit be over-aw'd by the laws of cuſtom or ſome unhappy neceſſity into the commiſſion of this idolatry, he could not but deſpiſe the idol he bowed down to, and ſee it a mere lump of wood or ſtone, notwithſtanding its gaudy dreſſes; tho' I acknowledge, I comprehend not what can reduce a philoſopher to this piece of ſhameful diſſimulation; the ſoul that is great in itſelf, is ſo in deſpite of fortune; he that can live virtuouſly, can live happily in the loweſt ſtate: and he that deſires but little, has no need of much: he that can deſpiſe riches, can deſpiſe the inſolence and pride of the rich: in one word, he that can command himſelf, needs be a ſlave to none.

After all, I think it were poſſible to evince the miſchievouſneſs of wealth as plainly as I have its uſeleſſneſs; but that were to preſs the point further than my preſent deſign requires: for my buſineſs was to ſhew, either that fortune was not neceſſary to our happineſs, or as far as it is, that 'tis in our own power; both which I may now preſume myſelf to have ſufficiently performed. I will therefore paſs on to the objection from fate.

CHAP. V.

Of FATE.

The notion of Fate *ſtated. Man's fondneſs.* Fate *from ſpiritual pride and looſeneſs.* Fate *impugned.* 1. *By authority. Various opinions about it, and its cauſes. The extent of its empire. The mind exempt. The true differences between the* Pythagorean *and* Stoic *fate——different opinions about the neceſſity implied in* Fate.——*Chriſtian* Fate *worſe than the Pagan.* 2. *By reaſon and revelation.* Fate *cannot derive itſelf from matter nor from God: 'tis repugnant to ſenſe and experience, the conſequences of* Fate. *Scripture cleared from countenancing* Fate. *Demonſtrated from the nature of God, his declared will and government.*

AMongſt the many ſhifts and devices men have invented to quiet conſcience, and at once to excuſe and enjoy their luſts, this is none of the leaſt, that they impute all to *fate*; not only the events that befal them, but even their crimes and follies, as *Juvenal* did the diſſoluteneſs of *Peribomius*; that is, they believe, or would be thought to do ſo, that all our affections aud actions, and all events that befal us, are inevitable; that no prudence can prevent, no induſtry fruſtrate the decrees of fate, againſt which we ſtruggle but in vain. This is the popular and general notion of *fate*, taught

The notion of fate *ſtated.*

taught first by *Democritus*, *Empedocles*, *Heraclitus* and *Leucippus*, and so derived down from age to age, and prevailing mostly amongst the multitude. Thus *Baccylides* in *Stobæus*'s *Eclogue*, expresses the popular notion of *fate*: *'Tis not in man to chuse his state, whether wealthy peace, or inexorable war, or all confounding sedition; but fate, the sovereign arbiter of each, leads us on blind and hoodwinked to our ruin.* And *Euripides* expresses the other part of the opinion, containing the adamantine chain, the insuperable necessity of fate, thus; Μόρσιμα δ' ὅτε φυγεῖν θέμις ὅτε σοφία τῆς ἀπώσεται ἀλλὰ μάταν προθυμ. ἀεὶ πόνον ἔξει. *'Tis not permitted us to shun our destiny; nor can any human prudence ward its blows; nor can any thing but endless and fruitless troubles attend our contention with it.*

Θνητοῖς ἐκ αἰθαίρετοι, ὅτ' ἔλεον τ' ὃ τ' ἀμαμπ. Ἄρης, ὅτε πάντεσσι σάσις· ἀλλ' ἐπιχείμπτει νέφ. ἄλλοτε ἐπ' ἄλλαν γᾶν ἀπάιδαφ. διῶσι. Stob. Ec. Phys. c. 8.

'Tis a sign of a desperate cause, or desperate impudence, to dispute against our common sense, and to defy the daily experience of mankind; and yet all this the abettors of an universal fate (such as this is) are guilty of; for they deny that liberty in man, which all laws divine and human, all exhortations and advices, all commendation and reproof, *i. e.* plainly God and man do suppose: for if the mind of man were over-ruled, if his present and future state were fix'd and determin'd by a fatal and inexorable necessity; then, as laws, advice, and exhortation would be useless and impertinent; so

all reproof would be unjuſt, and all praiſe and reward undeſerved; and yet, tho' the aſſertion of late be oppreſs'd and overborn by all theſe abſurdities, it wants not at this day its maintainers and ſticklers: for there are who maintain a neceſſity in human affairs and events, derived from the influence of heavenly bodies. Which notion of fate, take in the words of *Manilius*:

Fata regunt orbem, certâ ſtant omnia lege,
Longaque per certos ſignantur tempora curſus.
Naſcentes morimur, finiſque ab origine pendet.
Manil. Aſtronomicon. 4.

Fate rules the world, fix'd laws do all things guide,
And long time through their certain channels ſlide.
Death of the birth, of the beginning, th' end,
And all th' events of human life depend.

And there are others, who tho' they condemn judicial aſtrology, in ſet treatiſes writ againſt it, do yet maintain ſuch eternal decrees as imply a more flexible fate than any Pagan but *Democritus*, and thoſe juſt now mention'd with him, did ever hold: nay, a fate more impious than that of *Democritus*; for what he imputed to ſenſeleſs matter, theſe do to God; and as much more rigid as it is more impious than his; for he never thought of another life wherein eternal miſery ſhould puniſh thoſe actions that were unavoidable in this.

Now

Now the reaſon why this doctrine of fate, this abſurd and baffled doctrine is ſo greedily embrac'd and eagerly defended by many, is very plain; it feeds the vanity and curioſity of ſome, and the pride of others; 'tis a luſcious pleaſure to curious and vain minds, to fancy themſelves maſters of a ſtarry *Cabbala*, able to ſpell out and interpret the laws of fate, and pry into the deſtinies of future ages, which are covered with thick clouds and impenetrable darkneſs to all but them alone: 'tis a delicious pleaſure, no doubt of it, to the proud and haughty, and ill-natured, to ſee themſelves careſſed and exalted by God as his particular favourites; while the miſerable multitude, the reſt of mankind, are excluded from the capacity, and, much more, the hopes of happineſs and heaven; and in general, 'tis a ready apology for idleneſs and luſt, and all manner of ſins; for men might ſin confidently and without remorſe, if they did ſin fatally; or rather, nothing could be branded with the infamy of ſin and ſhame, when whatever men did, were the effect, the unavoidable effect of nature and neceſſity, an act of obedience to thoſe fatal laws which they could not tranſgreſs. *Tertullian* therefore ſpeaks very properly when he ſaith, *Mentis malæ impetus vel fato vel aſtris imputant, nolunt ſuum eſſe quod malum agnoſcunt: They impute the heat and ſallies of their luſt to ſtars and fate, being unwilling to charge themſelves with the guilt of that which they own to be evil.* This is the

Man's fondneſs for fate, whence.

uſe

Donec *Cerealis* mulceret animos, fato acta dictitans quæ militum ducumque discordia, vel fraude hostium evenissent. *Tacit. l. 4. hist.*

use *Cerealis* makes of this doctrine of fate in *Tacitus:* the *Roman* legions had behaved themselves very unworthy of the name and reputation they possessed, and were extremely dejected under the conscience of it; therefore he, to chear and encourage 'em, and to wipe off the stain and dishonour of their misdemeanour, imputed to fate that which ought with truth to have been imputed to the dissention of their leaders and themselves, and to the fraud and cunning of their enemies. From this little that has been said, as it appears why proud and vicious men contend for fate, so does it likewise of what importance it is to free men's minds from a persuasion so pernicious to the interest of virtue, the peace of the publick, the happiness of man, and the honour of God.

To which purpose, that I may contribute all I can, I'll consider,

First, On which side stands the advantage of authority, whether for or against fate.

Secondly, What plain reason, and as plain revelation, do dictate in this point.

Variety of opinions concerning fate and its cause.

As to the first, I will not pretend to make a just and intelligible collection of the different notions which have been taken up of fate; 'tis evident from that which *Grotius* has done of this kind, not only how tedious and voluminous, but also how obscure and confus'd the discourses of men have been

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on this ſubject: I ſhall only therefore, as far as my memory will ſerve me, conſider their opinions in ſuch a manner as the nature of this preſent enquiry ſhall oblige me. Moſt philoſophers do agree in one general notion of fate, that it is a connection or ſeries of cauſes ſucceſſively depending upon one another and producing a neceſſary effect or event, εἰρμὸς αἰτιῶν ἀπαράβατος, (Nemeſius.) Opinions concerning the firſt ground or original of this neceſſary connection or dependance were very various; ſome aſcribing it to *demons* or ſpirits, ſome to the influence of *ſtars*, ſome to the circumaction or whirling about of the heavens, ſome to an univerſal ſoul, ſome to the force of motion, ſome to the contexture and contrivance of natures, others to atoms, and others to God: and indeed ſince *matter* or *mind* are the two only things into which all philoſophers have ultimately reſolved their ſearch and enquiries after the original of all things, they ought to have looked for no other original of fate than one of theſe two. But this concerns my preſent queſtion but very little; for if man be over-ruled and determined by fatal laws, it matters little how it came to be ſo: nor did I mention this variety of opinions for any other reaſon than this, that it gives us juſt occaſion to ſuſpect fate itſelf as an erroneous and ill-grounded poſition; for obſcurity, and intricacy, and multiplicity of different notions about the ſame thing, are the general marks of falſhood and error.

But

But there are two things very material to be enquired after.

First, How far the empire or dominion of fate was generally extended.

And *secondly*, What kind of neceſſity, or what degrees of it were generally ſuppoſed to conſtitute fate.

1. *The extent of its empire.*

As to the extent of its power, this one thing is very remarkable, that the heathens did exempt the *mind* of man from its ſovereignty. *Democritus* indeed believed the ſoul of man as *neceſſarily* and *fatally* moved by the impreſſion of his atoms, as any other natural or irrational body. But *Epicurus* deſerted him in this; and following the conduct of common ſenſe and experience, acknowledged the liberty of the ſoul of man, and laboured (as *Plutarch* tells us) with all his might to aſſert it, and to preſerve the diſtinction of virtue and vice, which fate deſtroys: to ſerve this *Hypotheſis* it was, that he invented that new motions of his atoms, called by *Lucretius*, *Clinamen*, ſufficiently expos'd by *Tully*, and how well defended by *Gaſſendus*, I am not concerned to examine: for I have produced this opinion only as an inſtance of the clearneſs of this truth, that the ſoul of man is not ſubject to fate; for had not his *liberty* been undeniable and ſelf-evident, the principles of *Epicurus*'s philoſophy had certainly obliged him to follow *Democritus* in this, as in all other points, and to have believed the ſoul itſelf over-ruled by fate.

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The poets indeed made the monarchy of fate ſo univerſal, that they believ'd the gods themſelves ſubject to it. Thus *Jupiter* in *Homer* bemoans the fate of his *Sarpedon*, which he could not prevent. And thus another poet repreſents *Apollo* ſtriving in vain, by all the power of art and virtue of herbs, to reſtore life to his *Hyacinthus*. Nor was this the only poetick fancy; 'tis uſual with *Plato* to extend the dominion of fate over the gods themſelves: but this was no wonder; for fate with him imports the immutable laws of the ſupreme God, and gods thoſe ſpirits that were created by him. The *Stoics* indeed (at leaſt ſome of them) aſſigned a worſe reaſon for this ſovereignty of fate; namely, that the ſupreme architect could not correct the defects and incapacities of *matter*. After all this, 'tis no wonder that St. *Auſtin* (*de Civ. Dei*, *l.* 5. *c.* 1.) ſhould take this to be the general notion of fatal events, that they were ſuch as proceeded from the neceſſity of I know not what order, maugre God and man. But all this while it muſt be remembered, that this dominion of fate, tho' it limited the power, did not over-awe or neceſſitate the *will* of their gods. And no wonder: for I never find, as I remarked before, that any but *Democritus* and his tribe did extend the dominion of his fate over the ſoul of man. *Hierocles* makes the *Pythagorean* fate nothing elſe but the execution of that immutable divine decree, that the *virtuous* ſhould be rewarded, and the *vicious* puniſhed; and at the ſame time doth utterly deny, that man is any way neceſſitated or overruled

ruled in his choice or actions. *Alcinous* repreſenting the *Platonic* fate, determines indeed the event of things fatal; but at the ſame time he leaves the minds of men poſſeſs'd of their juſt and natural liberty. And whatever unavoidable connection of cauſes the *Stoics* talked of, no one did more exalt and magnify the liberty and power of the mind of man: ſo that *Nemeſius* might very well in general affirm, that the wiſeſt of the *Greeks* believ'd mens minds free, and the events of their actions fatal, whether he had reſpect to the former or the latter; for thus far the *Pythagorean*, *Platonic*, and *Stoic* agreed, that the mind of man was free, that events were fatal. Now 'tis not to be wondered at, that they, who did not judge the calamitous or proſperous iſſues of outward things to deſerve evil, ſhould place ſuch events wholly out of our own power, and deem them no way dependent upon our behaviour: 'tis enough that they left man's true happineſs, *i. e.* wiſdom and virtue, in his own power, which they always did. Ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰσὶ (*ſcil.* θεοὶ) καὶ μέλει αὐτοῖς τῶν ἀνθρωπείων καὶ τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὅλειαν κακοῖς, ἵνα μὴ περιπίπτῃ ὁ Ἄνθρωπος ἐπ' αὐτῷ τὸ πᾶν ἔθεντο. (*Marcus Ant. l.* 1.) And it deſerves here to be remembered, that they confined this fatality of events to this life: for ſuch of them as did believe the eternal duration, or immortality of the ſoul, did alſo believe that its miſery or happineſs in that ſtate, did depend on its behaviour in this. But how came the *Platonics* and *Pythagoreans*,

οἱ δὲ λέγοντες τὸν κόσμον τῶν ὅλων ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι. Τὸν δὲ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀνάλογον ἐκεῖ τῇ εἱμαρμένῃ εἶναι δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφώτατον Nemeſ. 3. 37.

thagoreans, who ſet that value upon temporal things which they deſerved, to agree thus far with the *Stoics*, in aſſerting the fatality of events? Or, how came the ſtorm and fury of all writers to light ſo heavily only upon the *Stoics* fate, if theſe taught the ſame thing with *Pythagoras* and *Plato*? They did indeed all of them acknowledge events fatal, and yet they differ'd widely in their notion of this fatality.

For, *Firſt*, The *Stoic* fate depended partly upon *matter*, partly upon *God*; whereas the *Platonic* fate depended wholly upon the will of a wiſe, powerful and good God.

Secondly, The *Pythagorean* and *Platonic* did believe good and evil to be diſpenſed by a divine and immutable law; but ſo, that one ſhould be the reward of virtue, and the other the puniſhment of vice. So that fate with them was nothing elſe but the execution of that decree of God in the prophet, *Say ye to the righteous, it ſhall be well with him; for he ſhall eat the fruit of his doings. Wo unto the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands ſhall be given him*, Iſa. xxiii. But the *Stoics*, in their aſſertion of the fatality of events, had no ſuch regard to the virtue or vice of man: nor did they ſettle or ſuppoſe any ſuch neceſſary connection or dependance between vice and virtue of man on the one hand, and puniſhment and reward on the other.

Thirdly, Tho' the *Platonics* taught, that all things were comprehended within the compaſs of fate, that is, the general and immutable laws

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of the ſupreme Being, yet did they not all believe that all particulars were decreed and determined; whereas the *Stoics* (if we follow the common opinion) did not exempt any particular event from the over-ruling neceſſity of fate.

Quicquid patitur mortale genus;
Quicquid facimus, venit ex alto.

Whatever ill unhappy man ſuſtains,
Whate'er he doth, 'tis what his fate ordains.

And *laſtly*, The neceſſity of the *Stoic* fate was rigid and inflexible; but that of the *Platonic* was not, or at leaſt, not in all caſes. And this puts me in mind of the

Second thing conſiderable in the notion of fate, *i. e.* what kind of neceſſity, or what degrees of it are ſuppoſed to render an event fatal? the *Stoics* did indeed think, that the neceſſity of fate was uncontroulable, irreſiſtible, inevitable; tho' I cannot deny, but that the opinion of *Chryſippus* and *Seneca* too (as he explains it ſomewhere in his *Natural Queſtions*) concerning fate, if placed in an advantageous light, would look with a more pleaſing and favourable aſpect upon the liberty of man: but let the *Stoics* think what they will, I do not find that others thought ſuch a neceſſity as this alone, and nothing leſs ſufficient to make up fate, or over-ruling influence of the ſtars; did yet believe, that the evil they threatened, might be divert-

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ed by prayers, sacrifices, and other rites, according to that of *Nemesius*; *There are no influences, no aspects of stars so forward and malignant, so fatal and irresistible, but that prayers and expiations may sweeten and mitigate them, or else prevail with those powers which govern them, to divert their menaces.* Besides this, the distinction of fate into denunciative and peremptory or conditional, was very well known to the heathens. This last was a fate, whose necessity depended upon some antecedent conditions, upon some suppositions which might or might not be fulfilled. This *Servius* discourses largely of, upon that place of *Virgil*:

πρὸς δὲ τῷ σέρνε τῶν Αἰγόκερων λέγοντας ἀναθυμᾶσθαι μὲν τὸν διὰ τῶν ἀστρων εἱμαρμένον, τρέπεσθαι δὲ αὐ τὰς τύχας ἢ ἀποτρεπομένας εἶναι γὰρ τινας καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τῶν ἄστρων δυνάμεις τὰς ἐκπλήττουσας αὐτῶ, καὶ ἄλλας τινὰς ὑπερτεινομένας δύναμις, τὰς τρέπειν αὐτὸν δυναμένας, ἢ διὰ τοῦτο τὰς τύχας ἢ τὰς σθενώσας τῶν θεῶν ἢ τῷ ἀποτρεπομένῳ ἐπιτυγχάνειν. Nemes. pag. 228.

Nam quia nec fato, merita nec morte peribat,
Sed misera ante diem——

Before her day fell the unhappy maid,
By love, not fate, nor her own crimes betray'd.

Where he that pleases may see many instances of this conditional fate. And, to come to an end, the necessity of fate, in the opinion of *Aristotle* and *Epicurus*, if *Gassendus* represents it rightly, was not an inflexible uncontroulable one, but one subject to alteration and change, to chance and many impediments, being nothing else but that energy or efficacy in natural bodies, which the wisdom of man did often prevent, the industry and courage of

man did often master, and chance did often hinder and over-rule. By all this we see plainly how careful the heathens were, that the necessity of fate might not destroy the liberty of man; how earnestly they contended for such a fatality of events, as might not cancel man's obligation to virtue, nor discourage him from the expectation and pursuit of happiness: for now to draw to a point, and to make some use of this tedious recital of the Pagan notions of fate; if we assert a *Stoical* fate, we yet leave the wise man whatever encouragements he can derive from the rewards of another life, and whatever satisfaction he can derive from virtue itself in this. And certainly though temporal events were fatal without any connection to, or dependence upon the choice and actions of man; yet even on this supposition, virtue were eligible, as that which teaches us to enjoy prosperity, and bear bravely that adversity which we could not prevent; but if, with other philosophers, we did believe, that not only the success of another life, but even that of this too, did depend wholly upon our behaviour, and that events were therefore only fatal, because those decrees of God, which did award happiness to the virtuous and misery to the wicked, are fixed and immutable; then we could not desire more powerful encouragements to virtue, or more evident proof that it is in our own power to be happy. If we grant the necessity that makes up fate, flexible and mutable, or if we suspend a fatal event upon conditions, as it were but reasonable to imagine

gine that all evil ones are ſuſpended, there will be no reaſon to queſtion whether man's happineſs be in his own power. If we make the neceſſity of a denunciative fate, which even wiſdom and virtue cannot ſurmount, extend itſelf to ſome few things: and that fate or fortune, which drags only fools and ſluggards in chains after it, more general and univerſal; which is a notion *Cælius Rhodiginus* (l. x. c. 20.) ſeems to have taken from the *Platonics*; we meet with nothing in all this which can rationally deter the induſtry and hopes of any man. If, laſtly, with *Ariſtotle* and *Epicurus*, we attribute no more force or ſtrength to fate, than to the efficacy of natural cauſes, which, we experience every day, is not irreſiſtible (for the mind overcomes thoſe inclinations we derive from natural temper, and life may be lengthen'd or ſhorten'd by temperance and luxury; it being a flame which is not of itſelf ſo inextinguiſhable, but that it requires our care to cheriſh it, and barren grounds may be improved and cultivated, *&c.*) then nothing is more evident than that it behoves to act like men, ſince our reaſon and virtue have the neceſſary tendency and efficacy, as well as any other natural cauſes; and ſince the concurrence of our endeavours may ſo much more properly be ſuppoſed neceſſary to promote our happineſs, than the influences of the ſtars, as it has a more direct and immediate operation upon our affairs, than the motion of thoſe heavenly bodies can have.

Chriſtian fate worſe than Pagan.

And now who would expect to find that fate in the Chriſtian, which was baniſh'd the Pagan world? Who would expect that the mind of man ſhould be fetter'd and bound by a more inexorable and deplorable neceſſity now in this age of *light* and *grace*, than ever it was in the thickeſt darkneſs of Paganiſm? Who could now believe that man's eternal ſucceſs, in another life, ſhould be as fatal as ever the *Stoic* did believe his temporal one in this? Or who could ever imagine that Chriſtians would charge that upon the decrees of a wiſe and good God, which the heathens, out of their honour for him, did ever refuſe to do? For thoſe of them, who made fate entirely the decree of God, did believe, that in the diſpenſation of evils, God did wholly regard mens crimes and ſins; that there was no other fate attended any man than what he was himſelf the author of. And they who did believe a fatality of events without any dependence upon the behaviour of man, did impute it to *matter*, not to God; to the *deficiency* of the one, not to the will of the other. 'Tis true, ſuch a fate is not to be found in the ſcriptures, as we ſhall ſee anon; nor is to be found in the fathers of the church: we may find *Juſtin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and St. *Auſtin* himſelf (however accuſed by ſome as a fataliſt) zealouſly diſputing againſt the Pagan fate. What would they have done, had there been then ſuch a notion of fate as has ſince prevailed amongſt ſome Chriſtians; which is briefly this, that the eternal miſery of nineteen parts of

of the world (I ſpeak modeſtly) and the eternal happineſs of the twentieth, is fatal; that the means conducing to theſe ends are fatal; the one being ſhut up under the invincible neceſſity of *natural impotence*, and *rejection from ſufficient grace*; the other being called and acted by *grace irreſiſtible*; that this neceſſity of fate is the reſult of a divine decree; that this decree proceeded from mere arbitrary *will*, without any regard to the behaviour of man. They that cried out againſt the Pagan fate, that it ſubverted human life, that it defeated all laws, that it left man no uſe of his reaſon, that it left no place for rational hopes or fears; with what bitter invectives muſt they needs have aſſaulted this fate? The Pagan fate left the *will* free; this bound and fetter'd, not only bereav'd of natural power and liberty (for we contend not about that) but deſtitute of grace and divine aſſiſtance: the Pagan fate, in the opinion of a great many, if not moſt, did not teach a rigid and inflexible *neceſſity*; this doth: they amongſt the Pagans who taught the neceſſity of fate inexorable, underſtood it of *neceſſity*, in temporal events; but this fate extends it to eternal ones. The *Stoic*, the greater aſſertor of fate, acknowledged, nay, eagerly contended, that man might be virtuous and happy in deſpite of fate; but theſe men make human happineſs, and virtue the very object of their fate; making ſin and miſery, virtue and happineſs, as fatal as any events whatever.

In vain now shall any one of 'em think to excuse their doctrine from the imputation of fate, by telling us (as * some do) that fate, in the Pagan notion, did involve God as well as man within the compass of its necessity; that what they teach, is nothing else but God's voluntary decree. This is a miserable shift; for this doth not at all lighten the weight of that fatal *necessity* that lies upon unhappy man, to think that God is not subject to the same: nay, on the quite contrary, the Pagan notion was more easy to the mind; and whilst it freed God from the guilt of man's ruin, it frees man from all hard and irreligious thoughts of God.

* *Calvini brevis Responsio, &c. in Præf.*

Numina cùm videas diris obnoxia fatis,
Invidia possis exonerare Deos. Mart.

Since heavenly powers to curs'd fate subject be,
The gods you cannot but from envy free.

It was pure piety in the *Stoic* to impute that fatality of event, which he thought independent of the good or ill behaviour of man, to any thing rather than to God, what impiety!—But I have done, I have sufficiently considered which way the stream of authority runs; and it evidently appears to be against all such notions of fate, as put it out of a man's power to be virtuous and happy, and determine his sin and misery wholly *necessary* and unavoidable. I will now proceed to consider,

Secondly,

Secondly, What plain reaſon and as plain revelation do dictate in this point. Thou doſt believe fate, and therefore doſt deſpair of happineſs; thy ſenſe muſt be plainly this, all is in the power of fate, nothing in thine own; there is nothing in thee to do that can contribute to make thee virtuous or happy. Whence can this *neceſſity*, this fate proceed? There are but two principles were ever fancied to be the firſt cauſes of all things, *God* and *matter*. Doſt thou believe this neceſſity proceeds from matter, from the motion of atoms, or the influence of ſtars? This belief, as St. *Auſtin* argues, does ſubvert the foundation of all religion; for he who believes that he depends upon fate, not God, can have no ſufficient reaſon for the worſhip of that God, on whom he hath no dependence: but this is that, peradventure, thou wouldſt have. Well, when thou art able to prove reaſon and underſtanding to derive themſelves from endleſs atoms, when thou canſt find out any kind of natural motion of matter or atoms, which can be the cauſe of freedom in the will, any motion that can at once be neceſſary (for ſo all motion of atoms muſt, be it of what kind it will) and yet free too; for ſuch all my deliberations and all my choices I make, prove the motion of the mind to be; then I will acknowledge a fate, not only independent from, but, if thou wilt, ſuperior to God; then I will forbear all farther attempts of charity, as vain, and leave thee to thy fate and miſery: but theſe are notions ſo abſurd in themſelves, that no ſimilitudes, no argu-

Reaſon and revelation againſt fate.

ments, can make 'em appear one jot more ridiculous, or irrational, than they do, to all men of ſenſe at the firſt hearing. There are ſome errors, as well as truths, that are ſelf-evident; there needs no demonſtration to convince us, that the one are errors, and the other truths; and of this kind are the errors we are ſpeaking of: if a man ſhould aſſert, that death is the original of life, that ſenſeleſs *matter* gives being to an underſtanding mind, that neceſſity is the parent of liberty, and ſuch like; it were an unpardonable weakneſs in any man to think, that ſuch aſſertions did ſtand in need of a laborious confutation. But there are, who ſuppoſe God the Author of all things, and yet ſuppoſe events fatal too; the former opinion was ridiculous, this is impious, for ſuppoſe mankind fatally guided by the influence of the ſtars, and that theſe ſtars have received this power and energy from God; is it not natural for every man to break out into the words of St. *Auſtin*; *How outragiouſly do theſe men reproach heaven, whilſt they believe thoſe crimes and villainies decreed by that auguſt ſenate and glorious court in heaven, which had any city upon earth decreed, it had deſerved to have been damned by the common vote, and razed to the ground by the united arms of mankind.* When I conſider, that the ſtars are the work of God, that their order and

Illi verò qui poſitionem ſtellarum quodammodo decernentium qualis quiſque ſit, & quid ei proveniat boni quidve mali accidat, ex Dei voluntate ſuſpendunt ſi eaſdem ſtellas putant habere hanc poteſtatem traditam ſibi à ſummâ illius poteſtate, ut volentes iſta decernant, magnam cœlo faciunt injuriam: in cujus velut clariſſimo ſenatu ac ſplen-

and motion was prescrib'd by him, that whatever vigour and efficacy they have, they have receiv'd from him; and then remember, that God is a most infinitely kind and good Being; I should easily suffer myself to be persuaded, that they could shed no influence upon this lower world, but what were extremely beneficial to it; that they could have no aspects but what were favourable and benign: I could easily believe, that all the inclinations they form in the body (if they form any) could be no other than innocent and virtuous: I can never believe, that lust or falshood, malice or cruelty, can come down from above; that our minds should be impregnated with sin and folly by the influence of heaven. No, certainly, if there be any virtue in the stars that extends itself to man, it must rather be the seed of life, and health, and virtue, than of diseases, death, or vice. I can easily fall in with the opinion of those learned men in *Cælius Rhodiginus* (*Antiq. Lect. l. x. c.* 20.) who thought that the virtue of celestial bodies which tended of itself to excellent ends, was marred and perverted by vicious education. And so the gravity of *Saturn* did degenerate into sullenness, niggardliness and melancholy? the magnanimity of *Mars* into rashness and fool-hardiness; the sharpness and sagacity of *Mercury* into mischievous craft and subtilty; the sweetness and gentleness of *Venus* into filthy lust, and so on. And this thought does well become every one that

didissima curia scelera facienda decerni, quali si aliqua terrena civitas decrevisset, genere humano decernente fuerat evertenda. *Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 5. c.* 1.

that pretends to any religion, whether revealed or natural: for this is consonant to the excellency of the divine nature.

Fate repugnant to sense and experience.

But this sort of fate springing from the influence of any natural bodies, is not only repugnant to reason, but to our sense and experience: for nothing is more plain than this, that any such influence cannot affect the mind, but thro' the body; and we do frequently find our reason asserting its power and dominion against all the force and strength of the body. Nor doth reason only, but in every nation, law and custom, triumph over the strongest inclinations of nature. As the innocence of the *Seres*, the chastity of those in *Arabia* and *Osroene*, the abstinence of the *Brachmans*, and numerous instances, which, he that pleases, may see in *Bardesenes* the *Syrian*, and others, do abundantly manifest that their manners are the effect not of the influence of those planets that rule their birth, but of those laws and customs that rule their country. Since therefore that *necessity* which our natural tempers and inclinations do impose upon the mind, is the utmost fate that we can imagine to proceed from the influence of any natural bodies, 'tis nonsense to suppose that fate insuperable or uncontroulable, which we see baffled and defeated every day, and in every nation.

The sum of those reasons I have offer'd against fate, is this; if we make God the Author of it, we impiously charge him with what is repugnant to his nature; for a good God cannot be

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the cauſe of man's miſery: if *matter*, we ridiculouſly ſuppoſe, that what is itſelf ſenſeleſs and inanimate, ſhould produce and govern a being endow'd with *life*, *underſtanding*, and *liberty*: if the *ſtars*, we run again into the ſame abſurdities; for if they have their fatal influence from God, then, properly ſpeaking, God is the Author, they but the inſtrument of our fate: if from themſelves, then our dependence on, and worſhip of God is vain; and beſides, we abſurdly ſubject the reaſon and liberty of the mind of man to the ſenſeleſs tyranny of atoms. If from the conſideration of the cauſes of fate we deſcend to examine what our experience teaches us, what common ſenſe informs us, each of 'em bears witneſs to the ſovereignty and liberty of the mind of man.

The conſequences of fate.

If we ſhould come in the laſt place, to examine what woud be the conſequences of a *fatal neceſſity* over-ruling man and human affairs, they are ſuch as are not only groſsly contradictions in themſelves, but fatal and deſtructive both to the publick and private good of mankind. 'Tis true, were the liberty of doing evil taken from man, we ſhould have no reaſon to complain; for then there would be nothing wanting to make the ſtate of man happy as that of angels, but immortality: but to bereave man of all power to do good, to neceſſitate and compel him to be wicked, how dreadful are the effects which muſt follow this? He that ſtains his hands in the blood of his ſovereign or his parent, will accuſe his ſtars not himſelf;

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he that pollutes himſelf in the inceſtuous embraces of a mother or daughter, may defend his actions as his fate, not choice: and how readily ſhall we do all that rage or luſt invites us to, when there is an excuſe prepared for all we do; for he is no more blameable who commits the evil which he could not help, than he is worthy of praiſe who did the good which he could not forbear. Were it true, that whatever miſchief man did, he were neceſſitated to do; we might with more juſtice arraign the ſtars and atoms, than malefactors: and all the inſtruments of miſchief would be every jot as guilty and criminal, as the man that us'd them. Were this true, we might as properly betake ourſelves to *magic* and *incbantments*, as to advices and exhortations, when we would reclaim the vicious: nor yet could the one be more effectual than the other; for what could alter what is unalterable? And for the ſame reaſon we might forbear our ſacrifices and prayers, ſince what will be, muſt be, and cannot be otherwiſe.

Deſine fata Deûm flecti ſperari precando.

You ſtrive in vain with pray'rs to move
The inexorable fates above.

Repentance and tears then may be, what *Seneca* calls expiation, *Ægræ mentis ſolatia*, *The deluding dreams of a ſuperſtitious mind*; but could ever procure us any any real advantage; ſo that on this ſuppoſition, what is now thought the

the only wiſdom, would be then the only folly of a ſinner, *repentance*. I think I may conclude here; for if it be not by this time evident, whether reaſon be for or againſt fate, we may juſtly deſpair of diſcovering what reaſon dictates in this or any other queſtion. I will now proceed to examine,

What plain text of ſcripture ſpeaks in this point. And here, in the firſt place, we are to expect no other fate than what depends upon God: for the ſcripture makes all things derive their original from him, and all things depend upon him. There is but one Creator, and one Lord; and therefore the creature can be ſubject to no laws, but ſuch as he enacts: ſo that whatever fate we now live under, muſt be imputed to the voluntary decree of God. Is then the eternal ruin of man fatal and unavoidable? If we enquire into the original of this unhappy neceſſity, it muſt be ultimately reſolved into the divine will. When God then decreed the inevitable ruin of man, under what notion did he conſider his ruin? Under that of *miſery*, or that of *puniſhment*? If under the notion of puniſhment; this implies plainly that we are to thank ourſelves for our ruin: for puniſhment is nothing elſe, but the infliction of that miſery which our ſin and folly have deſerved. But if under the notion of miſery, how can this conſiſt with the infinite goodneſs or wiſdom of God? Alas! How contradictory is this to ſcripture? There God ſwears that he delights not in the death of a *ſinner*; this decree would ſuppoſe *Scripture againſt fate.*

poſe him to delight in the death of the *innocent*: there he is repreſented *full of compaſſion*, and *ſlow to wrath*, even upon the repeated provocations; this decree repreſents him ſo addicted to wrath and cruelty, that he made a world on purpoſe to have whereon to exerciſe it; and doth exerciſe it merely for the delight he takes in it: the ſcripture finally repreſents him full of divine love for mankind, and not only not deſirous that they ſhould periſh, but extremely deſirous that they ſhould be partakers of everlaſting life: this decree ſuppoſes him ſo utter an enemy to, and hater of, mankind, that he made the far greater part to no other end, but only to make them miſerable. Let any unprejudiced perſon judge now, whether this be not as contradictory to the ſcripture as it is to ſenſe: nor is it poſſible that any one, unleſs prejudic'd, ſhould look into holy writ, and not diſcern evidently that man's ruin is the effect of ſin, not only wilfully and preſumptuouſly committed, but alſo obſtinately and impenitently perſiſted in: and that God is ſo far from being fond of our ſufferings and calamities, that he is ever and anon bewailing the diſappointment of his love, the defeat of his grace and mercy, by our obſtinacy and impenitence: it is the voice of his Son, 'tis the voice of God. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* Matt. xxiii. If therefore we deſire to know what the will of

God is, with reſpect to man, this is a full and plain declaration of it; there can be no other, much leſs any contradictory to this: if I may not confidently rely upon this declaration of the divine *will*, there is no revealed truth that I can depend upon; nor can revelation ſtand us in any ſtead: for nothing can be aſſerted with greater perſpicuity or ſtronger aſſeveration. But I have no ſcruples in me about this matter, I have no fears nor jealouſies of any ſecret degree of latent *will* repugnant to his declar'd one. I am as ſure that God is *good* and *true*, as that he is eternal and almighty: and were he not, we could reap but little comfort from all his other attributes, how great or glorious ſoever in themſelves. But, bleſſed be God, if from examining thoſe declarations of his *will*, which God has made us, we proceed to examine the manner and method of his government, as it relates to mankind (which is another, and the only way left us to judge of his will and decree) we ſhall find no inſtance in the whole ſeries of divine diſpenſations, which can create in us the leaſt ſuſpicion of lying under an arbitrary and tyrannical fate: nay, if we conſider the acts of divine providence, we find the quite contrary; that God ſo governs the world, that the iſſues of things are not fatal and unavoidable, but dependent upon ourſelves; that God is free, man free, and the events of things free, from any inevitable neceſſity: God indeed is ever bound to do what is beſt, what is wiſeſt, and can do no otherwiſe; this is the only fate God is ſubject to; but a poſſibility of different events is no way repugnant to his wiſ-

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dom, juſtice or goodneſs. In a proper ſenſe, therefore, there is no fate above him, that can impoſe a neceſſity upon him: nor does he impoſe any upon himſelf: if there is in any part of his government, a fatal and a peremptory neceſſity, we ſhould certainly find the tracks and footſteps of it amongſt inanimate and ſenſitive beings: how great a liberty does God make uſe of in this part of his government: the ſun, whoſe courſe ſeems certain and invariable as the imaginary laws of fate, ſhall, if need be, ſtand ſtock ſtill, or what is more, move backward towards its eaſt (*Joſh.* x.) An inſtance of both we read of in Scripture, when God thought fit to execute his judgments upon the *Amorites:* and condeſcended to give *Hezekiah* a miraculous aſſiſtance of his mercy (2 *Kings* xx.) The firſt ſhall not exert its natural heat, but ſhall ceaſe to burn and conſume; and when he ſees fit (as in the caſe of the three children, *Dan.* ii) becomes as harmleſs as the morning light; the waters ſhall ceaſe to flow, as did the Red ſea, when the army of *Iſrael* march'd thro' it, and ſaw with horror and delight, the rolling waves ſtand fix'd and unmov'd as the rocks and ſhores that bounded them; and yet what neceſſity, what fate can we conceive more immutable, whatever connection of cauſes it be produced by, than that which makes the ſun move, the fire burn, the water flow? If we conſider his government of kingdoms, where, if any where, the periods and revolutions of miſery and proſperity ſhould ſeem fatal and immutable; here again we ſhall find the footſteps of unqueſtionable

able liberty: Let us, for inſtance, conſider God's government of the *Jews*, what are the Laws which God obliges himſelf to obſerve towards them; *If you walk in my ſtatutes, and keep my commandments and do them; then I will give you rain in due ſeaſon, and the land ſhall yield her increaſe; and the trees of the field ſhall yield their fruit. And your threſhing ſhall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage ſhall reach unto the ſowing time: And ye ſhall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land ſafely*, &c. *But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all theſe commandments: And if ye ſhall deſpiſe my ſtatutes, or if your ſoul abhor my judgments, ſo that you will not do all my commandments, but that you break my covenant, I alſo will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, conſumption, and the burning ague, that ſhall conſume the eyes, and cauſe ſorrow of heart: And ye ſhall ſow your ſeed in vain, for your enemies ſhall eat it*, &c. Doth not God here lay life and death, good and evil, before them? Is not the one and the other to be the effect of their own choice, their own behaviour? Are we not reaſonably to ſuppoſe the *Iſraelites* at the time of entering into that covenant, whereof theſe are the ſanctions, as capable of happineſs, as they were of miſery? What was finally the iſſue of things? The *Jews* rebelled and revolted from God; and as he threatened, they were harraſſed and exhauſted

Lev. xxvi. 3, 4, &c.

And 14, 15, 16, &c.

by continual plagues and punishments. Well, did this happen so, because it could not happen otherwise? Was this the event, the fatal event of things which God did really *will*, and peremptorily resolve from the beginning, notwithstanding whatever professions he might make of his sincere desire of the welfare and prosperity of that people? Let God himself be the judge, who best understands his own mind. *O that my people had hearken'd unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries: The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him, but their time should have endured for ever*, Psal. lxxxv. By this sure, if we can judge of the meaning of God by any of his expressions, we may safely conclude, not only that the obedience and prosperity of *Israel* were things possible, and consequently their disobedience and ruin were not fatal; but also that their obedience and prosperity were the things which God did most heartily and sincerely desire. If we come to God's government of particular men, we may be sure that this is of a piece with his goverment of mankind or kingdoms, it being nothing else but a more particular application of those universal laws of wisdom, goodness and justice, by which he rules. An instance of liberty in temporal events, we meet with in the voyage which St. *Luke* describes. *Acts* xxvii. 10. we have St. *Paul* foretelling the fate that was like to attend themselves and their ship, if they pursued the

the voyage they had resolved on. *Ver.* 19. We meet with the accomplishment in part of his prediction; darkness and horror invades them, seas break in upon them, and at the same breach had death entered, had not divine providence interposed in favour, and at the request of St. *Paul.* Was their suffering fatal? Was it unavoidable? Had they not escaped the tempest, if they had believed St. *Paul,* and not departed from *Crete?* Or was their obstinacy or unbelief as fatal as the danger and the damage which attended it? The expostulation of St. *Paul, ver.* 21. will easily clear this doubt, *Ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.* What then! shall we think the issues of eternity fatal, when those of time, wherein we are comparatively so little concerned, are free? Shall God not only leave us the use of our reason, but also assist us by the aid of his providence for the avoiding temporal evils; and will he allow us neither for the avoiding of eternal ones? Must temporal ruin be the effect only of our sinful choice and obstinacy; eternal ruin the effect, not of our folly or sin, but *fate?* No surely: How often do we find God in the *Revelations* respiting his final sentence, and giving men space and time to repent, but they repented not. 'Tis true; and this was their obstinacy, not their fate: For if repentance had been impossible, to what purpose did God allow them time for it? That they might fill up the measure of their iniquity: An excellent paraphrase! Whom shall I believe?

God ſaith, he gave the *ſinner* time to *repent*; thou ſay'ſt, he gave him time to *ſin:* God ſays, he gave him time to make himſelf capable of mercy; thou ſay'ſt, he gave him time only to increaſe his guilt and puniſhment. How cruel are the mercies of ſome men! This is ſuch a grace or favour, as griping uſurers vouchſafe the careleſs debtor, whoſe fortune and eſtate they would ſwallow up and devour.

I have now, I hope, diſperſed thoſe clouds which ſeem'd to hover over our heads big with ſtorm and ruin; I mean, thoſe melancholy imaginations which ſcare and terrify the weak and ſuperſtitious minds of men. We may now boldly purſue, and poſſeſs ourſelves of happineſs: The way to it is open; there is no cruel Deity, no ſpiteful fortune, no inexorable fate that will oppoſe us; there is no God, but one of love and goodneſs, which moderates his almighty power, and tempers the ſeverity of his juſtice; a God, who paſſionately deſires our happineſs, and delights in nothing more than promoting it: All is lightſome and chearful where he is; perfection and happineſs dwell with him; *In his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at his right hand are pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. xvi. He ſcatters and diſſipates evil and troubles by the light of his countenance; death and hell fly far from before him, and hide themſelves in their own darkneſs. What can we apprehend from ſuch a God as this is! How can he delight in our miſery, who is all *love!* No, nothing but our guilt or folly can raiſe our fears; we may reſt ſecure of his favour, if we do not

deſpiſe

deſpiſe it; nor can he ever be made our enemy, unleſs we firſt become the enemies of virtue and goodneſs: What then have we to fear? There is no fate but the immutable law of God; that univerſal law which judges happineſs to the righteous, and miſery to the wicked. There is no fortune but his providence; which is nothing but the execution of that one general law, and the application of its ſeveral parts in particular inſtances. 'Tis plain therefore, we have nothing now to fear but ourſelves: If we be but true to our own reaſon, and faithful to our intereſt, we may confidently preſume both of the aſſiſtance and reward of heaven: There is therefore nothing left now to excuſe us from the guilt of our own ruin, but only that which is wont to be objected by ſuch as are enſlaved to ſome impious luſt, and groan under the weight of thoſe chains, which they made themſelves; I mean, an incapacity of happineſs: Which is the fourth objection againſt the poſſibility of attaining happineſs, and is now to be conſider'd.

CHAP. VI.

Of Incapacity.

The plea of incapacity ſuppoſes virtue a ſufficient foundation of happineſs. Incapacity threefold, natural, moral, penal. *There is no natural incapacity of happineſs. Grace and nature reconciled. The ſtrength of each examined, and demonſtrated in fact, with reference to cuſtom and faſhion. Pain and pleaſure. The force of inclination examined. Dulneſs conſider'd, and a light thoughtleſs temper.* Sect. 2. *Of moral incapacity. The corruption of nature, and divine aſſiſtance, how far they influence the preſent ſubject.* 3. *Of penal incapacity.*

THEY who urge their incapacity as an objection againſt the poſſibility of attaining happineſs, do ſuppoſe happineſs to conſiſt in virtue, in the pleaſure that flows from it, and the bliſs that will one day or other eternally reward it: They acknowledge, could they but be virtuous, they ſhould be happy; but they deſpair of obtaining ſuch a conqueſt over their vices, as may ſuffice to render their life ſmooth, equal and ſteady; and preſerve the peace of their conſcience, by giving them an unqueſtionable proof of their ſincerity towards God; without which 'tis impoſſible that they ſhould be filled with rational joy and peace,

peace, or abound in a rational hope. This therefore must be the supposition of my following discourse.

There may be three different kinds of incapacities fancied; which, for distinction-sake, I'll call *natural*, *moral*, and *penal:* each of which may be thus explained in the notion the objector forms of them: *Penal* incapacity is that desperate state wherein man is by God immutably rejected from pardon and assistance. *Moral* incapacity results from the strength and absoluteness of that dominion which sin has establish'd over some men, through a long and continued course of wickedness. *Natural* incapacity consists in such an unteachable stupidity of temper, or in such violent and invincible inclinations to vice, or in such a slightness, levity and inconstancy of mind, as render men utterly unfit to receive any lasting impressions of virtue, or to make any steady and resolute attempt of attaining it.

I'll begin with this first: And here I desire to be excused, if I do not take upon me to mark out the distinct bounds and limits of *nature* and *grace:* These two sisters are not like those *Chaldee* brethren *Abraham* and *Lot*, (*Gen.* xiii.) that were too mighty to dwell together. No, they delight to mix in loving embraces; their wealth and power increase by being united; and, like some plants I have read of, they never thrive when divided. I shall not dispute what power in man is a birth-

There is no natural incapacity of happiness.

right, what a donative: For alas! every thing he poſſeſſes is a grace, a favour of his prince: His natural abilities are ſo many graces he derives from God, and as properly ſuch, as any acceſſion to them which is inſpired afterwards: So that whenever I contend that any thing is in the power of man, I deſire to be underſtood of all that power which God has veſted him with, whether natural or ſupernatural.

Did men decry and villify nature, to beget in themſelves the more profound humility, and the more wakeful and ſolicitous induſtry; did they, like the *Semnones* in *Tacitus* (*De Morib. German.*) load themſelves with chains as the badge of their ſubjection to, and dependance upon, the Deity; did they magnify divine grace, in order to convince themſelves of the neceſſity and efficacy of it. and ſo to inflame their importunity and induſtry in queſt of it: This were piety and devotion, not error. Or, however they might exaggerate the impotence of nature beyond ſtrict truth, yet this would be a ſafe and pious error, as all humble and modeſt ones are: But when they endeavour to repreſent nature vile and corrupt, on purpoſe that they may the more licentiouſly pollute and abuſe it; when they magnify and exalt divine grace out of a moſt contradictious and prepoſterous deſign to juſtify their neglect and contempt of it (for they would fain have all to be ſo intirely imputed to grace, that they would not themſelves be put to as much as the trouble of ſeeking it) 'tis not only an error, but a pernicious and fatal one: For he that abandons

abandons the use of reason, renders himself incapable of any heavenly aid. God gives his grace to men, not to beasts: I must therefore oppose this fancy, and endeavour to persuade men, that it is in their power to be virtuous and happy: Nor can I think this assertion any ways injurious to the honour or goodness of God, if it be remembered, that whatever power I attribute to man, I acknowledge deriv'd from God. I will therefore with good assurance proceed, and try whether I cannot take in and demolish this fort which stops our way to happiness.

They, who affirm a great part of mankind incapable of virtue, forget that they dishonour God whilst they reproach their nature: For were it so, to what end could we imagine such men endow'd with reason and understanding? Not to worship, but defy their Maker. And was it not for this end, that they were made immortal too? Had God made man only to take his pastime in the world, like the *Leviathan* in the waves, such a soul as that which moves the fish of the sea, or the beasts of the earth, a sensitive soul, had been most proper for this end: Then might he have enjoy'd himself without reluctancy, without controul, without remorse, without shame. What can be the proper work of a rational creature, to which you allow not a capacity of virtue and religion? 'Till you can shew me this, I can never believe that God should endow man with a rational and immortal mind, out of any other design than such a one as might become such a being

created

created after his own image, which is the practice of holineſs and virtue. But why ſhould I wonder that men would not be aware of their contradicting reaſon, when they ſeem to be inſenſible of that contradiction, even to the common ſenſe and experience of mankind which they are guilty of? To what purpoſe are there ſo many ſchools of learning and good manners founded? To what purpoſe are there ſo many treatiſes of the educacion of youth writ? To what purpoſe does the wakeful parent ſtrive to inculcate the ſeeds of virtue into the child, and train him up by a wiſe diſcipline to the practice and cuſtom of virtue? To what purpoſe is the propoſal of rewards and puniſhments, and the reſtraint of laws, if either they cannot raiſe their hopes and fears they aim at; or, if hopes and fears be altogether uſeleſs and ineffectual, if no inſtruction, no diſcipline can mould and faſhion rough, unpoliſh'd, crooked, incorrigible Nature? Now here, tho' any man might have confidence enough to diſparage the judgment of mankind, and attribute all the pains they take in the education of youth, or the government and direction of riper years, to cuſtom, not to right reaſon; yet ſurely he would not ſo far diſparage his own obſervation and knowledge, as utterly to deny the ſucceſs of theſe means: For not to inſtance in particulars, 'tis not unknown to any one the leaſt verſed in the hiſtory of the world, that there have been national virtues as well as vices; that there have been times, wherein learning and religion have been as much in faſhion and reputation, as wickedneſs

and barbariſm in others. Shall we ſay, thoſe nations, thoſe times bred none of thoſe natures, which the objector affirms are uncapable of virtue? Let them ſhew what heavenly influences, what miraculous power, produc'd this change in nature: What, ſhould I urge the power of vain and falſe principles, the mighty force even of irrational cuſtoms, vanquiſhing thoſe inclinations which are more deeply rooted, more cloſely interwove with our blood and ſpirits, than any inclination to vice and folly can be? Such are, for example, the love of life, and the abhorrence of pain; and yet what a contempt of death is to be found, even in the moſt timorous ſex, as in the *Indian* women! what a contempt of pain, even in the weakeſt age, as in the *Spartan* youth! And all this having no ſtronger foundation than irrational cuſtom, and vain fantaſtick principles. Why ſhould we therefore be unwilling to attribute to excellent principles and virtuous cuſtoms, bleſſed and aided by heaven, as much power and virtue, as we do to ſuch as theſe? If the natural tendencies of man to wickedneſs can be curb'd; if his moſt furious and violent paſſions can be reſtrain'd and ſtifled; then, I think, it may as reaſonably be ſuppos'd, that divine truths, religious diſcipline, together with the grace of God, may effect this, as any thing elſe whatever. If the preſſing neceſſities and perplexities of the ſtate could change the ſoftneſs and luxury of *Otho* into military hardſhip and courage; I know not why a rational ſenſe of the true honour and glory of virtue and our eternal intereſt and innume-

rable

rable other conſiderations which the goſpel lays before us chriſtians, ſhould not be able to work the ſame wonders. If the reverence of *Seneca*, or any other motive, could produce a *Quinquennium Neronis*, could reſtrain the violent inclinations of that wretched man, ſo that his government for ſo many years ſhould be as gentle and juſt as that of the moſt gracious and virtuous princes; why would not the reverence of God, and the terrors of eternity be able to awe and curb the moſt vicious nature? This, methinks, ought well to be weigh'd by all who aſſert man's impotency and incapacity of virtue; they diſparage the goſpel, and reproach grace, as well as man, with impotence and inſufficiency: And yet both the one and the other is the power of God, and that in order to ſalvation. Do you conſider, That if you ſuppoſe man by nature unable to do any thing that is good, and then deny him, and utterly debar him from God's grace, you introduce fate: For what more fatal neceſſity can a wretched creature lie under, than *natural impotence*, utterly deſtitute and for ever forſaken of divine aſſiſtance? Or, if you bereave not man of grace, but yet bereave grace of its *ſufficiency*; do you not underſtand, that the fatal neceſſity continues ſtill the ſame? There is no change in the man's condition: only in this hypotheſis grace is diſhonour'd and reproach'd, as well as nature: And this reflects very rudely too upon God; it calls the wiſdom, the goodneſs, the ſincerity, the power of God into diſpute: 'Tis inconſiſtent with the *power* of God not to be able by his Spirit

rit and truth to ſubdue and overpower the corruptions of nature; 'tis inconſiſtent with his *goodneſs*, not to be willing to aid his poor creatures, when they call upon him; inconſiſtent with his *ſincerity*, to afford 'em ſuch aid as muſt tend to their greater miſchief, not good, as grace itſelf would, if it were only ſufficient to increaſe their guilt, but not to ſubdue their ſin: This were indeed, *when a child aſked bread, to give him a ſtone; and when he aſked fiſh, to give him a ſcorpion*, Matth. vii. 'Tis laſtly, as inconſiſtent with the *wiſdom* of God to confer grace to no purpoſe, as it was with his goodneſs to confer it to an ill one. Theſe, with many others, are the abſurd conſequences which attend the denial of the *univerſality*, or *ſufficiency* of grace: but if, on the other hand, we do grant that God Almighty is ready to aſſiſt every man who calls on him in his endeavours after virtue and happineſs, and that his aſſiſtance is ſufficient to the end for which 'tis deſigned; then we muſt needs acknowledge, that 'tis in every man's power to be good and happy: for 'tis no more than to acknowledge that man can do what he can do; or which is all one, what God has put in his power to do. By what a croud of arguments might I confirm this truth, ſufficient to bear down, and even ſhame the moſt impudent caviller? Why are not men good? Why are they not happy? Shall we ſay, that God doth not vouchſafe them his grace? Shall we impute mens miſery to God? Shall we charge that glorious and moſt perfect Being with want of compaſſion or ſincerity towards

his

his poor creatures? How eaſy will it be for him to appeal to the ſufferings of his Son; to the vigorous attempts and endeavours of his Spirit; to heaven and earth ſtamped with the impreſs of his *power* and *goodneſs*, on purpoſe to teach, invite, and almoſt compel us to worſhip and obey him; to the various methods of his providences contriving and purſuing our happineſs? How eaſily, laſtly, may he appeal for his purgation to our own conſciences? And theſe will tell us, as they ever do, in the diſtreſſes of our fortune, and the approaches of danger and death, to what we are to impute the cauſe of our ruin. What ſhall we ſay then? Doth God vouchſafe men his grace, the revelation of his truth, and the aſſiſtances of his Spirit, but that this grace is not ſufficient for us? Alas! how eaſy were it for any of us to refute this fancy by appealing to the ſolemn covenant of our baptiſm, to the characters and deſcriptions of good men in the goſpel, to the effects which our reaſon teaches us, muſt be natural and inſeparable from a true faith and divine aſſiſtance? But I will chuſe to make uſe of one argument which St. *Paul* furniſhes us with *Heb.* xi. There the apoſtle proves the poſſibility of pleaſing God by faith from undeniable inſtances of matter of fact, inferring from what men have actually done, what it is ſtill poſſible for him to do. Omitting the miraculous and extraordinary effects of faith, I will reduce the inſtances of this chapter to three heads.

Firſt, Such wherein faith appears victorious over the temptations which ariſe from the vicious

cious customs of the place men live in, from the prevalency and fashionableness of sin amongst those they converse with.

Secondly, Such wherein faith triumphs over temptations, arising from sensual pleasures.

Thirdly, Such wherein it overcomes the sense of pain, and fear of approaching evil.

I will begin with the first sort of instances. It must be confessed, that considering the propensions of our body, and the vanity and sensuality which the mind naturally derives from it, and from its commerce with the world, that it is a difficult thing to encounter temptations naked and alone; how much more difficult when backed and assisted by custom and *fashion*, when universal practice gives authority and reputation to sin and folly; and the poor man is left destitute of the assistance of good counsel, and the encouragement of good examples, to encounter not only the difficulty with which the reluctancies of our nature, but also the reproach with which the popularity and prevalency of sin clogs and imbitters virtue. And yet behold *Enoch* in a world (it seems) given up to sin, did not keep up in private to the practice of despised forsaken virtue; but was openly, and, in an extraordinary manner, eminent and exemplary in it; and therefore was his end as extraordinary as his life: *For having obtained this testimony, that he pleased God, he was translated.* This was owing to his faith. He was content to endure the reproach of the world, that he might obtain the approbation of God; and de-

Temptations from fashion conquered.

spise

ſpiſe the honour and applauſe of popular vice, and faſhionable compliances, that he might gain the kingdom wherein dwells righteouſneſs. Such another example was *Noah*; his righteouſneſs was like his ark afterwards, raiſed above a deluge not of water but impiety; he lived in a world ſo wicked, that it grieved God at his heart that he had made it: In this world he was a preacher and example of righteouſneſs, and his zeal by an *Antiperiſtaſis*, was not quenched, but enkindled by the wickedneſs of the world he lived in: This too was owing to his faith; he feared thoſe threats which that impious world ſcoffed at, and ſo *prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith*, ver. 7. No doubt, when this ſtrange building was preparing, *Noah* was aſſaulted by all the raillery and contempt, by all the ſhews of wit and reaſon, luſt and prophaneneſs could furniſh an impious age with: this man (ſay they) has ever been ſingular and fantaſtick in the whole method of his converſation; there wanted but ſuch a prank as this to compleat fancy into madneſs; he ever dreamed of judgments, and yet we he threatened continued our mirth and pleaſure; he alone in fears and anxieties has ſuffered the evils which his melancholy fancy created, and which are all that we ſhall ever ſee: for how long has he been preaching dreadful things, and yet ſtill the ſun ſhines, the heavens are fair and clear, our feaſts and luſts have the ſame reliſh ſtill: nor does our

experience

experience only convince us of the falſhood, but our reaſon of the impoſſibility of the man's dreams: for which way ſhall the fixed ſtate of nature be turned upſide down? Whence will this univerſal deluge come? Will his God break up the fountains of the deep? Or will he open the cataracts of heaven? But while they thus profanely ſcoffed and meaſured the divine power by their depraved fancies, *Noah* religiouſly fear'd, who had a different ſenſe of the majeſty of God, and provocation of ſin. He knew, that as mercy, ſo wrath is with God; that as he is *mighty to forgive, ſo is he to pour out diſpleaſure*, Ecclus xvi. And by this faith he preſerv'd himſelf, as from the impiety, ſo from the puniſhment of the old world: For though he was not, like *Enoch*, tranſlated; yet being preſerved out of a general ruin, he lived to ſee an end of the old world, and give beginning to the new.

To theſe I might add *Lot*, whoſe righteous ſoul was not infected, but provok'd and griev'd by the impieties of *Sodom*. *Joſhua*, as eminent for his faith as his victories, who reſolv'd, whatever courſe the *Iſraelites* would take (who to the laſt ſtood in need of as great prodigies to reſcue them from idolatry, as once from *Egypt*) *He and his houſe would ſerve the Lord*, Joſh. xxiv. Theſe inſtances are ſufficient to ſhew the power of faith in its victory over popular errors and faſhionable ſins, and by conſequence, over many inclinations at once; for the popularity and prevalency of any ſin is a bait appropriated

priated to our pride and vanity; which makes men affect precedence and ſeniority in all things which the world admires and applauds. Nor is this all; it awakens our natural inclinations, and invites us to gratify 'em; nay it enrages natural appetite, by giving it ſecurity and confidence, and by working upon the fancy and imagination; for the ſin is always wonderfully ſet off, that is prevailing and faſhionable. I will now paſs on to the

Second ſort of inſtances, wherein we may behold the ſtrength and power of faith in its victories over all temptations, which ſenſual pleaſures can preſent us. Numerous are the inſtances of this kind, which I might produce among the heathens; where we may find a ſenſe of the dignity of human nature, of the decency and honour of virtue, and a perſuaſion of the neceſſity of purity in order to a future ſtate, atchieving moſt manifeſt victories over all carnal and ſenſual luſt: but I will confine myſelf to two in this chapter. The firſt is that of *Moſes*; and this is a very full and comprehenſive one. His ſtation being ſo near the crown of *Egypt*, preſented him at once with all that the world can entertain ſenſual man with: there was power and wealth, the temptations of the ambitious mind (falſly called great;) and there was honour, the airy bait of vain unblaſted minds. Theſe, each of them ſingle and alone, have, like *Saul* and *David*, ſlain their thouſand and ten thouſands: and yet, that

Pleaſure conquer'd.

that it may appear that their overthrow is to be imputed to their own negligence and folly, behold here *Moſes* triumphing by faith over all theſe, *i. e.* over all the ſtrengths and forces of ſenſual pleaſures join'd and united together: when he was come to years, he refuſed to be called the ſon of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, and ſo deſerted a ſtation wherein nothing was bigger than his preſent enjoyment, unleſs his future hopes, which is the utmoſt felicy of a ſtate of ſenſuality. And what is more yet, what was it he did quit all this for? What was it he did chuſe in exchange? Was his ſoul too little to fill the great place he left? No, *Moſes*'s courage was as great as any thing but his meekneſs and humility. Was that height too open and too buſy for ſenſual enjoyments, and ſo he retired like *Tiberius* to *Caprea*, that he might indulge himſelf with more ſecurity and freedom, and fewer interruptions? No, he changed pleaſure for affliction, treaſure for reproach; the court of *Egypt* for the deſart of *Midian*; *he choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*; *eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of* Egypt. This was all the great work of faith: his mind was betimes poſſeſs'd of a juſt notion of, and awful reverence for the God of his fathers, the God of heaven and earth; and therefore beyond the wants and dangers of the deſart, he diſcover'd the peace and plenty of *Canaan*, and beyond both the glories of eternity; and therefore reaſonably concluded, that it

was more eligible to be the ſon of God, than of *Pharaoh*'s daughter; to be the heir of Heaven, than of the crown of *Egypt:* all this was intimated, verſe 26. *For he had reſpect to the recompence of the reward.*

I will add but one inſtance more to that of *Moſes*; and indeed there can be but one inſtance added that is greater, which is that of *Abraham* offering up *Iſaac*. In the former, we have ſeen faith triumphing over ſuperfluous and unneceſſary pleaſures; in this, we ſhall ſee it triumphing over the natural and inſeparable appetites of man. What might not *Abraham*, if he had been under the power of any principle but that of faith, have objected againſt this command of God? What, ſhall I ſacrifice my ſon? This is a ſacrifice might become *Baal* or *Moloch*, but how unſuitable to the nature of that God I worſhip? Nor is this leſs repugnant to his veracity than his goodneſs; ſhall I ſacrifice the ſon of the promiſe? Is it for this I forſook my home, my country, my birthright, and followed through inhoſpitable deſarts, and more inhoſpitable nations? Are all my expectations of a numerous and glorious poſterity come to this at laſt? Thus might *Abraham* have argued; but having a firm belief of the power, goodneſs, and faithfulneſs of God, he would not go about to preſcribe his wiſdom methods, or to limit his omnipotence by unbelieving fancies, or derogatory conceptions concerning it: but firmly believing that he could do whatever he pleaſed, that he would do whatever he promiſed: *He that had received*

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the promiſes, offered up his only begotten ſon, of whom it was ſaid, that in Iſaac *thy ſeed ſhall be called; accounting that God was able to raiſe him up even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.* We have ſeen men vanquiſhing all the pleaſures that the world can preſent us with, and conſequently all thoſe inclinations and appetites by which we are carried towards them. Faith in theſe men encounter'd and defeated whatever ſtrength and force can be ſuppoſed either in fancy or imagination, or in ſenſual appetite, or natural affection. The concluſion deducible from hence, is, that there is no deſire of wordly pleaſure in man ſo vehement, but that it may be conquer'd; and conſequently, that we cannot be neceſſarily betrayed into ſin by any inbred inclination of this kind. There is but one natural principle more, from whence we can imagine any neceſſity of ſinning to ariſe, which is, an averſion to all pain or trouble. There are therefore temptations ſuited to this principle in us; ſuch as deter us from our duty, either by the ſenſe of preſent, or the fear of impending evil: and it is thought to be the higheſt and difficulteſt trial of virtue, to ſurmount theſe temptations, *i. e.* to be virtuous, when virtue is immediately attended, or viſibly threaten'd with great evils. And yet behold,

Thirdly, In this chapter numerous inſtances of as great conſtancy in ſuffering pain, as we have ſeen before of continence in rejecting pleaſure; *ver.* 35, 36, 37. *Others were tortured, not accepting* deli-

Pain conquered.

deliverance; that they might obtain a better reſurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and impriſonment; they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, they were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword, they wander'd about in ſheep-ſkins, and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented. See here faith triumphing over all thoſe things that are the dread and terror of human nature, reproach, impriſonment, baniſhment, death, death in all its variety of torments; nay, many deaths, in the lingring torments they were frequently put to. How ſtrong, how firm, is this frail weak nature, when ſupported by a divine faith! All theſe expected a happy reſurrection; they ſaw beyond theſe midnight clouds, the dawnings of eternity, and unſpeakable comforts ready to ſwallow up and extinguiſh the memory of their ſufferings; and in this confidence they outbrav'd all ſorts of evils; nor is it to be wonder'd at, if faith, which overcomes the ſenſe of preſent [illegible], ſhould diſperſe the fears of future ones. Hence it was the parents of *Moſes* deſpiſed the menaces of *Pharaoh*, a prince arbitrary in his power, cruel in his temper, reſolved and bloody in the execution of miſchief.——Hence it was, that *Moſes* in the ſame manner deſpiſed the wrath of this king, and well-knowing that no place would be able to protect him from his power, and cruelty, but the deſart, he forſook *Egypt*, and fled thither; where he could not but foreſee he was to encounter inſuperable difficulties; but he endured, *as ſeeing him who*

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is invisible; and knew, that the God of heaven was every where present, and that in despite of every thing, under his protection he should be both safe and happy.

Now, since there is no evil the world can threaten us with, equal to that of torments and death, it were in vain and superfluous, after we have seen these conquer'd, to fancy other evils of a much slighter nature unconquerable; it were absurd to think that man could be frightned from his duty by popular reproach, or the displeasure of great men, or to the diminution of his estate, who cannot by death itself; 'twere absurd to fancy, that he who despises imprisonments, stripes, hunger, nakedness, torment, in obedience to his duty, and respect to its reward, should be discouraged by any little austerities or hardships which virtue may sometimes exact from him.

Tell me now then, you who complain of the corruption and impotence of man; you, who magnify the force and power of temptation, and from both infer the impossibility of being virtuous, and consequently of being happy; what have you to answer to these things, these matters of unquestionable fact? You see resolution and faith in these examples raised to that height and strength, which no wordly, no carnal temptation can resist: tell me then, why should the faith of a *Jew* out do that of a Christian? Were their promises more glorious, and therefore more efficacious than others? Look how far short time is of eternity, corruption of incorruption: so far was their *Canaan* of our

heaven. But ſuppoſe they had (as theſe ſure had) a proſpect of the ſame heaven, had they a clearer ſight of it and more convincing evidence of the certainty of it than we have? Alas, their *Shechinah*, *Bath-kôl*, the thunders and lightnings of mount *Sinai*, their pillar of cloud and fire, were not half ſo clear aſſurances of God amongſt them, as that glory which ſhone in the face of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that power communicated from above to his apoſtles: the reſurrection of *Jeſus* from the dead, and his aſcenſion into heaven, were a manifeſt teſtimony of God aſſerting and bearing witneſs to the truth of our religion, and particularly of that fundamental article in it, the reſurrection of the body and everlaſting life. What then, are our temptations greater than theirs? The confidence of the moſt ſenſual ſinner dare not arrive at this plea: let the voluptuary, the ambitious, confront his temptations with the enjoyments or the hopes of *Moſes*: let the moſt afflicted, miſerable man balance his temptations with *Abraham*'s ſacrifice of his ſon, or with the ſufferings of thoſe righteous men mentioned in the latter part of this chapter; and he muſt confeſs that his temptations are as much weaker than theirs, as is his faith. What then can be ſaid? Nothing, unleſs plainly this, that our caſe is not the ſame with theirs, either in reſpect of our inclinations, or our aſſiſtances: if this were ſo, then how could theſe men ſtand as a cloud of witneſſes againſt us in the laſt day? which St. *Paul* intimates in the beginning of the following chapter: how natural would it be for us, to

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wipe off any accuſation or reproach which their vice could faſten upon us by this eaſy anſwer? It is true, we were foil'd and overthrown by thoſe temptations which thoſe men conquer'd; and well might this happen; for neither had they our infirmities, nor we their grace; their nature was not ſo depraved as ours, nor our grace ſo ſufficient as theirs. Were this ſo, the ſinner might be more unfortunate, but not more criminal, than the ſaint; the different event of things at the laſt day, were to be imputed to the different diſpenſation, not different uſe of grace, *i. e.* to the partiality of God, not the negligence or wilfulneſs of man; than which nothing can be more impiouſly or abſurdly affirmed.

And now, let not hereafter a fancied impoſſibility of virtue diſcourage the weak, nor a pretended one excuſe the wilful: nothing is more evident, than that there is no inclination in man that is incorrigible, nor any temptation incident to our ſtate, which is inſuperable: let any man that pretends the contrary, conſider what reaſon has done in ſome; what cuſtom, what faith in others: let himſelf try, what reaſon, what diſcipline, what faith (from all which I never ſeparate divine aſſiſtance) can do in him; and, I am confident, he will not ſtand in need of any further anſwer to his objection; his own ſucceſs, as well as that of others, will be ſufficient proof of its weakneſs. Thus, I think, I have in general given a ſatisfactory anſwer to as many, at leaſt, as plead natural incapacity againſt the poſſibility of being happy: however, that no diſcouragement, no ſcruple may remain, I will give a particular

A *second* thing, which is ſuppoſed in the objection to incapacitate man for happineſs, is an unteachable ſtupidity, conſiſting in a ſlow conception and a treacherous memory. 'Tis true, indeed, the heathen philoſophers did require in their ſcholars the knowledge of many abſtruſe and difficult matters, as antecedently neceſſary to virtue and happineſs: ſkill in the mathematicks fitted a man for the *Platonick* philoſophy; and the knowledge of natural things was the foundation on which the *Epicurean* pretended his divine happineſs and virtue was to be built; and *Seneca* reckons the unthinking croud among the beaſts that periſh. All of them did with one conſent require three things to compleat a virtuous and happy man; nature, education or inſtruction, and cuſtom. To the *firſt*, they attributed the diſpoſition to virtue: to the *ſecond* the beginning: to the *third*, the eaſineſs and conſtancy; and to all three together, the perfection to it. And hence it is, that they did diſtinguiſh between perfect and imperfect; between political or ſtoical, and philoſophical virtue; and did not deem every nature capable of that virtue which was perfect and philoſophical. But our bleſſed Lord and Maſter, the author of Chriſtian philoſophy, requires no ſuch qualifications in thoſe who will be his diſciples; all that he requires, is, an humble and an honeſt mind, freed from proud prejudices, poſſeſs'd with a ſincere love of the truth, and a ſincere reſolution of obeying it; accordingly St. *Paul* obſerves, that ſuch were moſt wrought

Dulneſs implies not an incapacity of Happineſs.

wrought upon by the preaching of the goſpel: *Ye ſee your calling, brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe: and God has choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, has God choſen,* 1 Cor. i. Nor will any one imagine, that acute and eminent parts are neceſſary to render a man capable of being a Chriſtian, who ſhall conſider the brevity and plainneſs of the Chriſtian faith and law. Doth it require a deep and penetrating judgment, or a firm and tenacious memory, to enable us to underſtand or remember that plain and ſhort ſummary of Chriſtian practice? The grace of God *teacheth us to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live righteouſly, ſoberly, and godlily, in this preſent world?* Titus ii. Or, that as brief and perſpicuous abridgement of the Chriſtian faith, *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent?* John xvii. Or, that excellent abridgement of both by St. *Paul, Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt?* Acts xx. 'Tis true, all things are now ravelled and entangled; and the faith and virtue of Chriſtianity is not half ſo conſpicuous amongſt Chriſtians, as their theological wars, tumults and factions: but this is owing to man, not the goſpel; to the pride and ſuperſtition of the one, not the obſcurity of the other. Nor may any one here with ſhew of reaſon object, that tho' the

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ſubſtance of the chriſtian faith and practice is clear, yet the reaſons of both are not ſo: for who can ever imagine ſuch a ſtupidity of nature, as can diſable any one to underſtand the proofs by which the ſcripture eſtabliſhes the great fundamental article of our faith, that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, the *Meſſias*, or *Mediator* between God and man. Or, what ſtupidity of nature can render it an impoſſible taſk to us to comprehend the two fundamental reaſons of evangelical righteouſneſs, namely, the ſubſerviency of it to the happineſs of this, and of another life, and the holineſs of the God we worſhip? I do not write this, as if I meant hereby to repreſent induſtry in ſearch of divine truths, as ſuperfluous and unneceſſary; but to aſſure all, of how mean capacities ſoever, of the ſucceſs of it. I am not ignorant how much ſome applaud themſelves on the account of acquir'd knowledge of doubtful and abſtruſe things; how much others value themſelves on a particular ſort of politicks, remote enough indeed from virtue; and others, on accompliſhments as remote from reaſon, as the other politicks from virtue; and how much all of them do deſpiſe the dulneſs of thoſe who cannot, and the ſimplicity of thoſe who ſtrive not to equal them in theſe attainments: but all this doth not beget in me the leaſt ſcruple or ſuſpicion of the truth I have before aſſerted. I know that our duty is plain, and that the path of duty is the moſt direct and compendious one to the happineſs of this life, and of another: for I know, that nothing is ſo taking with God, as an humble faith, devout, pure, peaceable and charitable

religion. As to worldly happineſs, I know, that a man's own virtue, ſupported by God's Spirit, and guided by his truth, is the ſafeſt and the plaineſt guide he can follow in dark and tempeſtuous times: true policy conſiſts not in that addreſs or ſubtilty of ſpirit, which furniſhes a man at all times with plauſible ſhifts; but in that integrity and virtue that needs none: and the beauty and life of converſation conſiſts not in artificial faces, fantaſtick dreſſes, mechanick motions, ſhrugs and cringes, much leſs in mechanick (for ſo I may call ſet forms of) chat; but in an humble, diligent, and faithful diſcharge of the duties we owe to all thoſe ſeveral relations we ſtand in, and the obſervance of thoſe laws of converſation which true philoſophy preſcribes. This is that which will make us acceptable to all, and dear to the wiſe and good: ſlights, and tricks, and arts may divert and entertain; but virtues do charm and captivate: thoſe may open us the way to men's houſes, and their tables; but theſe to their boſoms, to their hearts. The ſum of all is, great endowments of nature ſeem to be neceſſary for the attainment of unneceſſary accompliſhments; common endowments are ſufficient to make us capable of virtue and happineſs. This *Marcus Antoninus* has well obſerved, and has as well expreſs'd in ſeveral places: more fully, *lib.* 5. *ſect.* 3. more briefly elſewhere, thus; *Tho' thou deſpaireſt of being a logician, a naturaliſt, a mathematician, a courtier, a ſtate-empirick,*

Ὅτι ἐν διαγέσεως κεῖται τὸ εὐδαιμόνως βιῶσαι, καὶ μὲ ὅτι ἀνάγκησας διαλεκτικὸς καὶ φυσικὸς ἔσεσθαι, διὰ τοῦτο ἀσυλήτως καὶ ἀλυπότερον καὶ αἰδημόνως, καὶ κοσμικὸς καὶ ἐυπειθὴς θεῷ. Marc. Ant. Lib. 7. Sect. 41.

pirick, a talkative bigot, or a mechanical fop (for theſe two paſs for accompliſhments with ſome) *yet deſpair not of becoming a wiſe man and a philoſopher: though thou haſt not abilities big enough to make thy confidence paſs for wit and demonſtration; though thou haſt not the art of wheedling, nor the talent of ſhifting and deluding; though thou haſt no faculty for deep diſſimulation, nor ſlight inſinuation; though thy parts lie below all theſe, and a great many other perfections; yet for all this deſpair not, thou haſt parts ſufficient to make thee happy: thou mayſt be free* (redeemed from the ſervitude of vice) *modeſt, humble, charitable, and obſequious to God; and in theſe very few things conſiſts τὸ εὐδαιμονως βιῶσαι, the bleſſedneſs of life.*

Lightneſs and inconſiderateneſs examined.

A *Third* thing, wherein the objection ſuppoſes natural incapacity to conſiſt, is, ſuch a ſlightneſs, levity and inconſtancy of temper as ſeems to render men neither fit for any cloſe application, nor ſuſceptible of any deep and laſting impreſſions: it cannot be denied but that ſome are of ſuch an airy, volatile, and various temper, that they ſeem to be deſigned for nothing ſerious, nothing great; as if, like flowers, they were the ſport, not work of nature, made not for uſe, but ornament: but I have always obſerv'd, that nature makes up defects of one kind by advantage of another. Thus it happens here: thoſe conſtitutions which do moſt want ſolidity and ſtrength, do moſt partake of ſoftneſs and tenderneſs: ſo that they are as much more apt to receive impreſſions, as they are more unapt to retain them than others; like yield-

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ding air, which the gentleſt ſtroke doth as eaſily divide and part, as it doth eaſily return and unite itſelf again. Hence 'tis generally obſerv'd, that that age and that ſex, that are ſuppoſed to have leaſt of fixedneſs and conſtancy, have moſt of heat and paſſion in religion; and thoſe minds, which are worſt furniſh'd with courage and experience, with judgment and reſolution, are moſt apt and eaſy to be mov'd and wrought upon by religion, or deluded by ſuperſtitious fears, and as apt to be tenderly affected by the repreſentations of divine goodneſs and compaſſion; ſo that, like bodies which have leſs bulk, but more agility, their motions nimbler, though their force and ſtrength be leſs. Now, if this be ſo, then the diſadvantage of this temper is not ſo great as it is fancied: for tho' their paſſions laſt not long, they are eaſily raiſed; and conſequently if our addreſſes to ſuch a temper be but a little more frequently repeated they cannot but prove ſucceſsful; and ſuch perſons, by the frequent returns of holy paſſions, will grow habitually devout, and their devotion will be as ſteady, and more elevated than that of a ſlower and firmer conſtitution. But after all, wherever there appears an exuberancy of this humour, this is to be imputed rather to their fortune than their nature: a wanton fortune, and too indulgent an education, is generally attended with a gay, wanton, and unfixed mind. And 'tis true, that it is a difficult matter for ſuch minds as theſe to attain to wiſdom and virtue; but 'tis not becauſe they cannot conſider, but becauſe they will not: let ſuch exchange their haunts of

pleaſure for the houſe of mourning; let them but now and then intermix the converſation of the wiſe and ſerious with that of the giddy, fanciful, and frolickſome; and they will ſoon find their humour much corrected, and their minds better fixed; to all this, if they could be perſuaded to add the contemplation of a ſuffering Saviour, of a holy God, and of a judgment to come; and to this, the devotion of the cloſet, made up of ſerious reflection on theſe ſubjects, and their own eternity; this would ſoon reduce their looſe and ſcatter'd deſires, it would ſoon recall the roving wandering mind, and make it delight to dwell at home in the company of wiſe, devout and important thoughts.

And now, I think, I have left no part of this objection, founded upon natural incapacity, unconſider'd. Do men complain of their heavineſs and ſtupidity: acute parts and a tenacious memory are not neceſſary to make us virtuous or happy. Do they complain of their violent inclinations to ſin? I have ſhewed them reaſon, cuſtom, faith, curbing the moſt natural, or the moſt outrageous and ungovernable appetites of man. Do they complain of the levity and inconſtancy of their temper? Let them retire from the flatteries and careſſes of a wanton fortune, and a wanton converſation; let them acquaint themſelves with the wiſe, or the afflicted, with divine truths and their cloſets, and this will ſoon work a happy change upon them. If they are too ſoft and delicate for the bitterneſs and ſeverity of theſe preſcriptions, nothing but the much ſeverer diſcipline of afflictions and judgments can effect their cure.

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Under this head of natural incapacity, that other objection from moral incapacity has been ſufficiently anſwer'd; for cuſtom is, at moſt, but a ſecond nature: and I have at large diſcourſed of the power of reaſon and faith over nature: I have at large produced many unqueſtionable inſtances, wherein we have ſeen them overcome our moſt natural and moſt neceſſary appetites; ſuch as are, our averſion to pain, our love of life, and ſuch like. Nor is it poſſible that any vicious cuſtom ſhould have taken deeper root in us, or united themſelves more cloſely with our very beings, than theſe; and therefore it were abſurd to fancy them more violent, ſtubborn, or inſuperable. That expreſſion of the prophet, *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo learn to do good, who are accuſtomed to do evil*, Jer. xiii. is but a pathetick exaggeration (which is uſual in a prophetick ſtile) of the difficulty, not an aſſertion of the impoſſibility, of an habitual ſinner's change: what has been done, and daily is done, can be done, and 'tis in vain to prove what no man can deny. St. *Paul*, when he had recited a catalogue of ſuch ſinners as ſhould not enter into the kingdom of God, doth afterwards add, and *ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of our Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God*, 1 Cor vi. And *Tertullian* does appeal to the power and efficacy of the Chriſtian religion, viſible in the extirpation of vicious habits

2. *Of moral incapacity.*

ticular and clear, though brief anſwer to each part of this objection.

The force of inclination examined.

There are three things ſuppoſed by it to render man naturally incapable of virtue and happineſs. *Firſt*, violent and invincible inclinations to vice: againſt this as the moſt conſiderable part of the objection, the whole bent and force of the precedent diſcourſe was levelled; and therefore this needs no further anſwer; only here it will be worth our remarking, that thoſe differences that are in the nature and temper of men, are not eſſential, but accidental; and conſequently they may make the way to happineſs more difficult to ſome than others, but impoſſible to none. The ſtrongeſt inclination to virtue (I ſpeak of that which is the reſult of natural temper) ſeems to me but a weaker inclination to vice; every man has naturally a propenſion to pleaſure, and conſequently the ſenſitive part of us to ſenſitive pleaſure: how much finer mold our firſt parents were made of than we are, I know not; but this I find, the deſire of pleaſure was natural to them even in innocence: this was that which the beauty of the apple did eaſily inflame; and that was to ſuch a degree, that I am not able to diſcern by the text, to which I ſhould rather impute their ſin, and the loſs of paradiſe; to the deſire of knowledge, or the deſire of pleaſure: this tendency of the ſenſitive part is natural to all; but in ſome leſs violent; unleſs we may ſay upon one ground, 'tis equal in all, for the difference of tempers diſcovers itſelf rather in the different kinds of pleaſure we purſue,

purſue, than in the different degrees of our inclination to it: we are all equally allured and drawn, yet not by the ſame but ſeveral objects; ſo that if luſt prevail in one, ambition as much prevails in another, and covetouſneſs in a third, and in others intemperance and ſloth: ſo that the difficulty of virtue ſeems much the ſame to all the ſons of *Adam*, the ſtrength of temptation conſiſting eſpecially in our weakneſs; not in the excellency of the object we are taken with, but in our inclination to it. Hence it is as difficult for one man to overcome his covetouſneſs, as for another to overcome his luſt; and reſtleſs toilſome ambition is as luſcious and taking with ſome tempers, as lazy and delicious luxury with others. If this were well weighed, it would make us more mild and gentle in the cenſure of others, and not ſo ſoft and eaſy in excuſing ourſelves. 'Tis further worth our obſerving here, that every man's virtue derives ſome tincture from his conſtitution and temper; ſo that, generally ſpeaking, 'tis not difficult to gueſs a man's natural conſtitution by the complexion of his religion: however, virtue ceaſes not to be virtue; nor will that ſlight allay of the natural conſtitution extinguiſh its vigour and merit, though it behoves every man to keep a ſtrict and jealous guard upon his inclinations; for nature ſoon revives even after it has been ſometime buried; and labours moſt after that perfection which does moſt contradict and oppoſe the particular vice of his conſtitution: for it will be otherwiſe morally impoſſible to gain a conqueſt over it, and as impoſſible to gain a rational peace and ſecurity without this conqueſt.

has made all poſſible attempts to recover himſelf from his ſin, and that without ſucceſs: and becauſe,

Laſtly, No man can conclude his endeavour unſucceſsful, till death ſurpriſe him in an obdurate and impenitent ſtate: for habitual ſinners have become eminent ſaints; and lapſed Chriſtians, nay apoſtates, have not only recovered their former ſtate, but redeemed their crimes by more than ordinary degrees of repentance, devotion and charity, and, by undeniable conſequence, have been reſtored to God's favour; for grace is in order for pardon, ſanctification in order to juſtification, virtue in order to glory: therefore no man muſt give over his attempts of appeaſing God, and ſubduing his corruptions, while God continues him in the land of the living. Theſe rules, if obſerved, will, I queſtion not, render the perſuaſion of ſuch a *penal ſtate*, as the objection ſuppoſes, very profitable and uſeful to ſome, and not pernicious to the eternal intereſt of any: for he, who by the dread of ſuch a ſtate, is deterred from bold and provoking ſins, and from an habitual courſe of wilful impiety, reaps an unſpeakable advantage by it; and he who adheres to religion and virtue, and continues to his life's end, ſincerely endeavouring to pleaſe God, and obtain his pardon, ſhall never ſuffer any prejudice in another life by his melancholy and miſtaken fancies in this.

Having thus cleared my aſſertion, that happineſs is attained here, from ſuch objections as ſeem to derive any countenance or ſtrength, from

from reaſon, there remains but two more that I think of; the one whereof preſſes hard upon me, under a pretended authority of revelation; the other urges the experience of mankind againſt me. I will begin with the former; and conſider with what aſpect revelation regards the happineſs of this preſent life; and whether there be any thing in it that forbids the hopes, or obſtructs the attainments of it.

CHAP. VII.

Religion no enemy to our preſent happineſs.

Happineſs the fruit of religion, proved by plain texts, and the natural influence of faith and virtue. The doctrine of the croſs not inconſiſtent with happineſs; nor that of mortification.

IF men were not very ingenious in framing excuſes of their folly, and in the contrivance and purſuit of ruin, it would ſeem very ſtrange, that the goſpel, which was deſigned to be the great inſtrument of our happineſs, ſhould be alledged to diſcourage and damp our endeavours after it; that the goſpel, whoſe great end is to fill our minds with joy, peace and hope, ſhould be traduced as an enemy to our pleaſure. But ſo it is; and therefore reſolving to leave no obſtacle unremoved, nor deſpiſe any objection

that

that has the leaſt colour or appearance of an argument in it, I will examine this fancy.

Religion ever had, and always muſt have, the character of its author viſibly ſtamped upon it; nothing that is not infinitely kind, and infinitely wiſe, can be found in any part of revelation truly divine: from whence we may rationally conclude, that the great aim of God in eſtabliſhing religion, is to advance the happineſs of man, and to advance it in a method conſonant to thoſe natural principles he has implanted in him: nor did any one inſpired author think otherwiſe. *He that keepeth the law* (ſaith *Solomon*) *happy is he*, Prov. xix. *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them*, Pſal. cxix. *Happy is the man that findeth wiſdom, and the man that getteth underſtanding*, Prov. iii. That this was to be underſtood of actual and preſent happineſs in this life, is apparent from what follows a little after; *Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to thoſe that lay hold upon her.* And though the goſpel, as a higher and more perfect diſpenſation, doth propoſe to us, as our great and chief end, life and immortality; yet doth it by no means exclude us from happineſs here; but rather doth eſtabliſh it upon proper and firm foundations; and fences it about with impregnable bulwarks. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled,*

troubled, neither let it be afraid, John xiv. 27. *Now the fruit of the Spirit is joy, love,* &c. Gal. v. 22. *Now the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, and make you abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt,* Rom. xv. 13. *Godlineſs is profitable to all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. iv. 8. Nor can I indeed conceive how the ſtate of a righteous and holy ſoul ſhould be other than a happy and bleſſed one: the belief and confident expectation of a heaven, muſt needs be more tranſporting and raviſhing, than the richeſt fancy of a ſinner; and that ſecurity, both in reſpect of this and a future life, which a good man enjoys in the protection of God, and the aſſurance of his favour, who is almighty, immutable, *&c.* muſt infinitely exceed any thing that a ſinner can attain to; and muſt exclude thoſe uneaſy fears which do frequently interrupt the ſinner's enjoyment, and over-caſt his hopes. He that loves God and virtue, cannot but be happy in the daily practice and enjoyment of what he moſt delights in. And he, laſtly, that hath ſubdued his paſſions, and overcome the world, cannot chuſe but reap the daily fruits of ſo glorious a conqueſt, and be conſtantly entertained with pleaſing reflections and delightful proſpects; and yet, if he ſhould enjoy nothing elſe, that ſovereignty, liberty, magnanimity, and divine charity, and enlargement of ſoul, which he thereby gains, were an abundant reward of this victory. The ſum of all is this; a good man has the beſt title to the bleſſings

of

of this life, and the glories of another; he enjoys this world with as great ſecurity, as wiſdom and moderation; and has an aſſured hope of a far better when he quits this; the anticipations of which by faith, love, and hope, do at once facilitate and confirm his conqueſt over all unworthy luſts, and entertain him with inexpreſſible ſatisfaction and pleaſure.

For this reaſon I do in this chapter diſcourſe of happineſs, without that immediate regard to another life which might be expected; not judging myſelf obliged either to prove the certainty of it, or to demonſtrate the reaſonableneſs of embracing miſery during the ſpace of this ſhort life, in expectation of that perfect and eternal happineſs which is promiſed hereafter; ſince I ſaw well enough, that in the ordinary courſe of providence, the happineſs of this life and the other were not incompatible: but on the contrary, that that wherein the life and being of true happineſs in this world doth conſiſt, was but a neceſſary introduction to, or qualification of us for the happineſs of another; which doth in ſome meaſure already appear, and will much more in the progreſs of the following diſcourſes.

The doctrine of the croſs no obſtruction of this life's happineſs.

But what becomes now of the doctrine of the croſs? This is a very ſoft and mild commentary upon that of our Saviour, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me*, Matth. xvi. 24. But this is not ſo formidable an objection, as it may at firſt ſight ſeem:

'tis

'tis true, ſuffering through all the progreſs and ſtages of evils, even to the laſt, that is, death itſelf, was a common, nay almoſt an univerſal duty in the beginning of Chriſtianity; being indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the propagation of the goſpel: but, bleſſed be God, the obligation of that duty has long ago ceaſed; and all that I can think neceſſary to be ſaid here, in perſuance of my deſign, is, that the pleaſures of thoſe confeſſors and martyrs did far out-weigh their ſufferings whilſt they lived; that when they ſuffer'd death itſelf, the time was come when they muſt exchange temporal for eternal happineſs. Nor doth this at all infringe the truth of my propoſition; which doth not vainly aſſert an eternal duration of happineſs in this life, but only teaches the poſſibility of attaining it. And, I think, the death of the martyrs and confeſſors, is rather a great confirmation than confutation of this opinion: teaching us plainly, that in deſpite of all calamities, 'tis not only poſſible to live, but to die happily; which laſt is no ſmall acceſſion to temporal happineſs. From this little I have ſaid on this occaſion, 'tis eaſy to ſhape an anſwer to what is objected from St. *Paul*, *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.* 'Tis confeſſedly and indiſputably true, that had thoſe Chriſtians been deſtitute of that hope which was their ſupport, they had ſunk under the weight of ſuch ſufferings, and ſo had been moſt miſerable of all men: but ſince their hopes did not only ſupport them under their afflictions, but alſo that it may

render

render them ſomewhat more than conquerors; all that can follow hence is, that the reſurrection and eternal life are unqueſtionable truths, and that he, who believes 'em as firmly as confeſſors and martyrs did, may, like them, be *happy*, though a thouſand ſeas of calamities and troubles ſhould break in upon him.

Mortification recommended by the light of nature as ſubſervient to our preſent happineſs.

As to mortification, which is a duty of perpetual obligation (for the purity of religion is ſtill the ſame, tho' its fortune in the world be alter'd) this did at firſt ſignify the renunciation and extirpation of *Jewiſh* and *Pagan* luſt, according to that of St. *Paul*, *Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. And it ſtill ſignifies the ſame thing; and whatever difficulty we are to encounter in the performance of this duty, it muſt be vanquiſh'd; for 'tis impoſſible to be wicked and happy: a man wicked is his own *hell*; and every paſſion, every luſt is a fiend, a fury that doth outrage and torment him; and all this the heathens themſelves did not only conſtantly acknowledge, but alſo paint out with as lively eloquence as any Chriſtians could ever do: their experience (over whom ſin had an uncontrouled dominion) moſt effectually convincing them of the outrages, tyranny, and unſpeakable miſchiefs of wicked and abominable paſſion: nay, ſo manifeſt is it, that the ſubduing theſe irregular paſſions is neceſſary to our

our happineſs, that even *Epicureans* themſelves (notwithſtanding their confining the happineſs of man to this ſhort life, and by a probable conſequence reſolving ultimately into the enjoyments of the body) did yet look upon themſelves as extremely injured by *Tully*, and others, when they repreſented them as revolted from, and enemies to virtue. 'Tis not my buſineſs here to examine what foundation for virtue their philoſophy could have, or what rank and place they could aſſign it; 'tis enough that they could not but acknowledge it as neceſſary to happineſs.

'Tis true, mortification, in the goſpel-ſenſe, requires us not only to reſtrain theſe irregular luſts; but alſo not to over-rate and over-value this world, and the things of it; not to look upon this life as our only or chief portion, and doat upon it with fondneſs and paſſion: and I cannot think that this is any thing more than what is implied and included in the former notion of mortification; this moderation of our inclinations to the world, being a proper and neceſſary foundation of the former abſtinence; it being very improbable that he, who values and doats upon the world above all things, ſhould refrain from irregular purſuits and enjoyments of it. Now, even this degree of mortification, and the neceſſity of it in order to happineſs, was as clearly taught by the wiſe men among the heathens, as by our Saviour and his apoſtles; by thoſe conducted by the light of nature, as by theſe conducted by the light of revelation; and that together with the diſcipline which promotes it, I

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wrought by it, as a proof of its divine original: nor are ſuch inſtances as theſe wanting at this day. Theſe, as they do now refute all the idle excuſes of ſinners, ſo will they one day be urg'd in judgment againſt 'em to convince 'em, that they owe their ruin to their ſloth and obſtinacy, not their impotence; tho' theſe men ought to remember too, that moral impotence is ever derived from a voluntary neglect or contempt of all the means of happineſs and virtue. I think, I might now diſmiſs this objection; having given full ſatisfaction to all ſcruples that might diſturb or diſcourage any well-meaning and honeſt mind; and evidently defeated the pretences of ſuch as would fain ſhroud and ſhelter their voluntary ſin and folly under the vain excuſes of impotence, incapacity and inſupportable infirmity, or inſuperable temptations: for all theſe are mixed and combined in every part of the former objection, and receive one and the ſame anſwer. But I foreſee, I ſhall be thought in this whole diſcourſe to have had too little regard to our original corruption, and divine aſſiſtance; and therefore, tho' I endeavour'd to guard it in the beginning againſt all ſiniſter interpretation, I will here add a brief account of both; eſpecially as far as it ſhall appear to me to concern my preſent enquiry.

The corruption of Nature conſider'd.

Firſt, As to the natural corruption of man if corruption may be called natural, on the account of the tendency of our ſenſitive inclinations, ſome things are very plain, ſome very obſcure: what is plain, is this, what the preſent ſtate of man is with reſpect to that righteouſneſs which

which the gospel requires: what is obscure is this, what the state of *Adam* before the fall was: without a clear knowledge of which 'tis impossible to determine how much our nature is now degenerated (as is suppos'd) from the primitive purity and excellency of its creation. *Secondly*, how guilt and corruption could be transmitted or derived from *Adam* upon his posterity. *Thirdly*, what can be supposed, properly speaking, to be the demerit, offence, or provocation of original corruption; what punishment can be due to it, divided and separated from voluntary transgressions. These, and a great many things of the like nature, I purposely pass over, as neither of great importance in themselves, or at leastwise of no great use to my present enquiry, and go on to what is plain and necessary; and that is, what the present state and condition of human nature is: for nothing can be more evident, than *that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*, Gal. v. These two being contrary to one another in their tendencies and inclinations, this conflict or opposition of spirit and body discovers itself the more, the more pure and perfect the law is that we are under. This tendency of the body is so apparent and undeniable, that it was ever acknowledged by all wise heathens. Hence the *Platonicks* frequently impute the dominion of the power and liberty of the soul of man to its conjunction with the body; and hence it was, that some of them whom St. *Austin* refutes, by giving an account of the

Plotinus, Ennead. 1. *l.* 1. *c.* 9. *Ennead.* 2. *lib.* 3. *c.* 15. *Ennead.* 3. *lib.* 1. *c.* 8. *Aug. de civ. Dei.*

nature of the raiſed body, rejected the Chriſtian doctrine of the reſurrection, judging the reſtitution of the body, rather a diminution of, than acceſſion to, the happineſs of the mind. The *Pythagoreans* looked upon the body as the priſon and puniſhment of the ſoul: and, in ſhort, the philoſophy of the heathens did conſiſt chiefly in this, the ſubduing the appetites of the body to the reaſon of the mind: and this appears moſt plainly to be the drift and ſcope of Chriſtian philoſophy: from whence it follows, that the diſorder of human nature (call it original corruption, or what you pleaſe) conſiſts in the φρόνημα σάρκος, *the luſt and concupiſcene of the fleſh.* This is evident from all the writings of St. *Paul*, eſpecially *Romans* the viith; and this is the ſenſe of our church, *Art.* the 9th. Nor, indeed, are we capable of imagining any other corruption in man; for if there be a conflict between right reaſon and carnal appetite; if the tendency of the body and mind be oppoſite and contradictory, 'tis nonſenſe to ſuppoſe both corrupt and ſinful: for then the contradiction and conflict would ceaſe. From hence it follows plainly, that we are born with capacities of, and inclinations to, virtue as well as vice, though nothing be more manifeſt than that the appetite of the body exerts itſelf firſt, grows up to ſtrength and maturity ſooneſt, and doth more powerfully and forcibly move, than the ſuggeſtions and perſuaſions of reaſon. *Secondly*, it is from hence plain, that the ſtate of righteouſneſs conſiſts in the prevalency of the body over the mind. And from hence appears the neceſſity of divine grace

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or assistance; for since the dominion of righteousness cannot be established, but in the subjection of the body, and the body doth in power so much overmatch the mind, the appetites of it being both more forward, more violent, more constant, I had almost said, more natural than the dictates of reason; and this power receiving daily increase and augmentation by a sensual education, and by a daily and unavoidable commerce with the world, and those temptations which awaken, gratify, and enflame the appetites of the body; it were morally impossible that the mind should master and overcome the body, if it were not aided by divine grace and assistance. But then it must be remember'd, that 'tis repugnant to the very notion of aid or assistance, that it should make void the necessity of our own endeavours: as the light of revelation doth not extinguish that of reason, but increase it; so neither does the strength of God's grace render our natural strength useless, but improve and help it. This added to what I have said before, comprizes all that is necessary to be known concerning grace; and may be reduced to these three or four heads. *First*, That the grace of God is necessary to enable us to live virtuously and happily; *Secondly*, That grace does not extinguish nature, or cancel our obligation to industry, or a careful use of that natural power God has invested us with; *Thirdly*, That God is most ready and desirous to further and assist all men in their endeavours after virtue and happiness; and *Lastly*, That the grace of God is sufficient for us, or that we receive

Divine Assistance, or Grace considered.

by it as great an addition of ſtrength or ſpiritual aid, as being joined with our ſincere endeavours, is neceſſary to make us virtuous and happy. If we deny the firſt of theſe, we ſubvert the foundation of prayer to, and dependence upon God; we can give no tolerable account of at leaſt one third part of the goſpel of Chriſt; and we unavoidably diſcourage mankind from all hopes of happineſs: If we deny the ſecond, we deſtroy the very nature of man, render all laws, exhortations, admonitions, rewards and puniſhments uſeleſs, ſilly and impertinent; and make divine grace the very foundation of carnal ſecurity, of deſperate and deſtructive negligence and ſloth: If we deny the third or fourth, we muſt unavoidably affirm, either that the happineſs of man does no way depend upon the grace of God, or that his miſery is fatal and unavoidable. All which are abſurdities, groſs and palpable to all minds which lie not under the thickeſt darkneſs of blind ſuperſtition and prejudice. Whoever will now reflect upon all that has been ſaid, will eaſily be able to conclude, that we have no enemy without us, none within us, that can neceſſitate and compel us to be miſerable: miſery may be our choice or puniſhment, it can never be our fate: our natural corruption may invite and incline us, but can never force and compel us to be wicked: for there is no temptation, no inclination, which God's grace and our induſtry are not able to reſiſt and overcome: ſo that now there remains at leaſt no other incapacity of happineſs, than what is *Penal*, which is the next thing to be ſpoke to.

Penal

Penal incapacity consists in God's final and immutable rejection of man from grace and pardon. The matter of this objection shall be fully handled, *Vol.* 4. where I shall be obliged to treat of the troubles of the mind, and their cure. In the mean time, all that is necessary to be observed here, is, *first*, That this state of final rejection from grace and pardon, is *Penal*; a state to which nothing but mens voluntary transgressions can betray 'em, and those too transgressions of the deepest guilt, and most crying aggravations: for surely nothing less can provoke a God, *who delights to exercise loving-kindness and mercy*, a God of infinite long-suffering and patience, to pass a sentence, an irreversible sentence of eternal ruin and damnation upon any of his creatures. *Secondly*, That no mistaken fancies of the unpardonableness of our state may either tempt us desperately to renounce God our Saviour, and virtue, it behoves us to consider, what ought to be the proper influence of this persuasion that there is such a *Penal state* on this side the grave.

Of Penal incapacity.

First, If they who believe such a state, will act consonant to their own opinion, they must not allow themselves in a course of wilful sin, lest they be insensibly betray'd into that dreadful state.

Secondly, Since impenitence and hardness of heart is a necessary and inseparable consequence of that dreadful sentence, which excludes men from grrce and pardon; therefore no man can rationally conclude himself in this state till he has

of a ploughman. Indeed this ſtate, when active and glorious, is full of fears, and cares, and hazards; when ſluggiſh and unactive, full of ſhame: What can be the happineſs of a ſtate to dig for friendſhip, or for pleaſure? For love is the buſineſs and enjoyment of equals; obedience is all ſubjects can offer, or indeed monarchs can receive: all higher and nearer approaches to the throne, are but intruſions of ambition and deſign; nor can I poſſibly diſcern what ſatisfaction the great mortal can take in any expreſſions of duty or affection, which he can never diſtinguiſh from the fawning and flattery of thoſe who in their hearts deſpiſe and hate him: how ſhall he know that any truly love him, when none dare ſlight him? Or how ſhall he diſcern who ſerves him out of duty, where every man even obtrudes himſelf upon his commands out of intereſt? In a word, the paſſions of a prince are ſo much greater than other mens, as is his mind and fortune; his converſation is not with the minds of men, but with faces or rather maſks and diſguiſes. And as to his pleaſures, his guſt of them is very flat, being cloy'd and ſurfeited by his affluence: and whereas all other men, as the ambitious and vainglorious, the covetous, the lover, ſeem to aſcend, and riſe above themſelves in the acquiſitions of thoſe pleaſures they aſpire to; the monarch debaſes himſelf, deſcends and ſtoops below his fortune to meet *his*. And yet I am not of *Apollo*'s nor *Solon*'s mind; I cannot think there is any great happineſs in the ignorance and quietneſs

quietneſs of a labouring cottager, ſuch as *Tellus* or *Aglaus Sophydius:* I love ſecurity, but not that which contempt breeds; I would have my ſecurity owing, not to the littleneſs of my fortune, but the greatneſs of my mind: I love a quiet, but a philoſophical life: I would have my tranquillity ſpring not from the ignorance, but reaſon of my mind; from the right government of my paſſions, not from the meanneſs of my education or fortune. For the ſame reaſon I do not call men happy, whoſe ſlow and eaſy temper, like the waters of the dead ſea, is not to be moved, even by wind and ſtorm. I do not call ſtupidity a calm; the ſoul that is inſenſible of trouble, is ſo of joy too: whoever is capable of any deep impreſſion, is ſo of any ſerious reflection too; and what is the ſtate of ſuch a man? I would not have my life paſs by like a dream, whilſt fleeting and imperfect images of things do ſcarce awake, and too ſlightly affect my drowzy and dazzled ſenſe. In a word, the happineſs I ſeek after, is ſuch a one, which is owing neither to natural conſtitution, nor to fortune; for then it would not be in our power.

The learned, whether happy.

Whom then ſhall we call happy? Surely, if any, the knowing and learned: theſe are the ſouls that converſe with heaven, that dwell continually in the pure light, and feed upon the bread, the joys of angels. But, alas! if happineſs were the inſeparable companion of learning, how came the Stoick's adored *Cato* to be led [illegible], pride, and humour, and vain-glory, thro' [illegible] burn[illegible];

burning ſands and dreadful deſarts? How came he, in a mood of deſperate diſcontent, to die his own murderer? Whence was it that the learned and eloquent *Tully*, after ſo many brave diſcourſes of the contempt of death and pain, and, briefly, all human evils, did ſink ſo poorly under the weight of his misfortunes? Whence was it, that after he had taught the ſoul's immortality, and its tranſlation into ſome glorious ſtar, he ſhould at laſt be ſo unwilling to let it leave this vile clod of earth, and the decay'd, melancholy, and darkſome manſion of the body? If learning did put men in poſſeſſion of happineſs, why was our *Raleigh* ſo uneaſy, ſo unfortunate, not more toſs'd by a reſtleſs fortune, than a reſtleſs mind? Why was our *Verulam* ſo utterly a ſtranger to happineſs in both fortunes, as unable to govern and enjoy proſperity aright, as to bear up under adverſity? If learning were ſo ſovereign an antitode againſt miſery; if philoſophy were ſuch a paradiſe, and ſpeculations were ſuch luſcious meals, the very fruits of the garden; why do the learned leave their ſacred ſhades to haunt the houſes of great ones, or the courts of princes? Why do they fawn and cringe, and with all imaginable aſſiduity and artifice labour to inſinuate themſelves into ſuch men, whoſe eſteem for them is a juſt ſcandal to them, and their favours but ſo many publick marks of reproach? O vileſt ſort of ſervitude! Can it conſiſt with the grandeur of a philoſopher, with the true liberty of a Chriſtian ſpirit, to lacquey ſome favourite of fortune,

fortune, and for many years together with an obſtinate ſtupidity digeſt the caprices of his humour; and not only diſſemble his vices, but magnify even his vanity and folly? And not this only, but there are ſlaviſh arts of inſinuation to be practiſed upon every one that's near him: O glorious merit! When the ſame thing recommends the philoſopher, that doth the *Valet de Chambre*, or the footman! And yet after all, even this equals not the baſeneſs, the ſlavery of thoſe who proſtitute philoſophy and themſelves to the multitude, and make an ignorant and inſolent herd the arbitrary ſovereigns of their principles, their liberty, their happineſs; for this depends upon their popularity. O how far ſhould I prefer the humble, contented, and independent drudgery of an honeſt mind, before this unmanly ſervitude: How far ſhould I prefer the generous and undeſigning freedom and unconcernment of a poet (whatever ignorance or contempt of intereſt it may be traduced for) before the former ſort of ſervile philoſophick proggers!

The happineſs of the devout queſtioned.

And now there remains no place where happineſs can as much as be ſuſpected to dwell, unleſs amongſt the devout and religious. Theſe, ſure, live in raptures and transfigurations on the mount; theſe ſure have their converſation in heaven, and from thence derive glory, and liberty, and joy, and peace, and hope; theſe are partakers of a divine nature, how can they therefore be deſtitute of a divine happineſs! But, alas! behold the bleſſed Jeſus,

Jeſus, and we ſhall find him, as the pſalmiſt and the prophets repreſent him, *A man of ſorrow, and acquainted with grief.* Hear again the moſt zealous and the moſt elevated of our divine Maſter's diſciples, *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men the moſt miſerable,* 1 Cor. xv. 19.

O happineſs!
Thou bleſſed ſtate, or rather pleaſing ſound,
Thou always ſought, and never to be found!
In what grot do'ſt thou, or what cell,
Or in what court or temple dwell?
Where, and what art thou? Art thou merely name;
No otherwiſe known than by reports and fame?
Art a reality? Or, art thou juſt
Like publick good and publick truſt,
A ſolemn, ſacred, but deceitful notion?

Objections anſwer'd.

But to return from this revery. This is, after all, but a ſlight and popular objection; which, from the evil conſequences which attend the ſins and follies of the multitude, and from thoſe complaints which human infirmity has ſometimes wrung from the wiſe and virtuous, would unſoundly and illogically infer, that there is no ſuch thing as happineſs here below. Beſides, the ſufferings of martyrs, and the words of St. *Paul*, have been conſider'd in the foregoing chapter: and in the ſecond chapter of this ſection, the reader may find ſome inſtances of happy

happy men; which is a punctual anſwer to the objection: but you'll ſay, 'tis a very ſhort one, to an objection of ſo great weight, and of ſuch general credit, and ſpun out by me myſelf to a very great length. I acknowledge, it deſerves a fuller anſwer; and therefore after I have told you that I have made a ſhew of hunting after happineſs in ſeveral conditions of life, only to rally and expoſe their folly, who ſuppoſe it may be found in a lucky juncture of circumſtances, I will give you one.

The men then, whom I call happy, are ſuch who are poſſeſſed of true and ſolid goods; and thoſe ſuch which fortune cannot give nor take away; ſuch were Chriſt and his apoſtles; and ſuch are all thoſe at this day, as are transformed into the glory and image of the divine nature, by the mighty energy of the divine Spirit and divine truths. Let us conſider what the ſtate of Chriſt and his apoſtles was in this life. I will not take notice of thoſe ecſtatick pleaſures, which they felt when they did thoſe Godlike works, which we call miracles. What triumph could be equal to theirs, who ſaw diſeaſes, devils and death, ſubject to their commands? What joy could be equal to theirs, when they gave life to the dead, ſight to the blind, ſtrength to the lame? *&c.* To what a height was wonder and delight raiſed in each of theſe performances? For nothing could be more wonderful than the power, or delightful than the charity conſpicuous in them: But this I paſs over, becauſe this power

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is not to be attained by us. Let us come to that which is; I mean, the virtues of Chriſt and his apoſtles. *He had not a hole where to lay his head:* 'Tis true; but how truly great was he within himſelf? How much above the mean and unmanly deſires of ambition, covetouſneſs or luſt? He indulged himſelf in no ſenſual carnal pleaſures, 'tis true; but how calm that ſoul, which no anger or envious paſſion diſturb'd, where nothing but ſacred love dwelt? The love of God, the love of man, and the rational and wiſe love of himſelf? How happy that ſoul which was illuminated with divine knowledge, ſupported by an unſhaken faith, and filled with joyful reflections and glorious hopes? That ſoul, which in the ſilence of the night, and the retirements of the mount, did pour forth itſelf in prayers and hallelujahs? That ſoul, which, full of God and full of heaven, had no room for uneaſy cares or afflicting ſorrows? 'Tis true, our Saviour met death with pale looks and melancholy pangs of ſoul; but 'tis as true that his faith ſurmounted his fears; his agony endured but for a little while; an undiſturb'd peace, and a well-ſettled ſerenity of mind immediately followed it; and his trouble and pain in death, like the eclipſe that attended it, did but overcaſt and darken the joy, the light within, not extinguiſh it: who could finiſh the laſt act with more humble majeſty, or with more ſettled peace? In the life and death of our dear Lord we behold that of his diſciples; for they were all followers of him, as they deſir'd we ſhould

ſhould be of them: What can be happier than their ſtate here was? Their life was regular and philoſophical; their joy ſteady and rational; their love of God vigorous; their charity to man fervent and diffuſed; their deſires, as to the world, modeſt; their minds reſolved and brave in afflictions, chearful and compoſed in death itſelf.

Let it ſtand then as an unſhaken truth, that happineſs may be attained in this life: For what the followers of our Lord and Maſter attain'd to, that may we; their natural paſſions and infirmities were the ſame with ours; our trials and temptations are far leſs than theirs; we ſerve the ſame God, we are guided by the ſame truths, ſupported by the ſame power, elevated by the ſame hopes; we have the ſame peace bequeathed us, the ſame Spirit, the ſame heaven promiſed us, and we march under the conduct of the ſame captain of our ſalvation, who *by his death has aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light*. Nor ought this to ſeem to us an over-daring or preſumptuous poſition, ſince the poſſibility of happineſs is a notion conſonant to the common ſenſe of all mankind: for 'tis happineſs which laws, enacted for the government of the multitude, and philoſophical rules, preſcrib'd for the government of our paſſions, do aim at; all lawgivers have ever promiſed the people wealth, and peace, and glory, and ſecurity, as the fruits of their obedience: and all philoſophers have ever promiſed tranquillity of mind and rational pleaſures to their followers, as

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mean the obſervation of great abſtinence from ſenſual pleaſures. No monk or anchoret can ſpeak with a more glorious contempt of the world than a Stoick; but their flights, who would allow the body, the world and the things of it, no place nor degree in the number of good things, are too daring and bold to lay any ſtreſs upon: but the opinion of other philoſophers, who allowed theſe their proper place and value, ought to be of weight with us; becauſe they ſhew us plainly, that mortification was ever thought by the light of nature ſubſervient to our true happineſs. *Hierocles*, in the beginning of his divine comments, gives us a ſhort but full account of the *Pythagorean* (and I may add *Platonick*) philoſophy in this point: The ſubſtance of which is, *The buſineſs of philoſophy is to purify the ſoul of man from ſenſual luſts and inordinate paſſions, and to tranſform it into the likeneſs and image of God: This is that which it purſues, by diſcovering to us excellent truths, and by recommending to us the practice of excellent virtues.* And this was that philoſophy which the beſt and acuteſt of the heathens looked upon as the only way to happineſs; ſo far were they from judging it inconſiſtent and incompatible with it: nay, they deemed this very ſtate of virtue a ſtate of more exalted happineſs, and an image of the divine life.

Φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσις καὶ τελείωσις κάθαρσις μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ὑλικῆς ἀλλογίας, καὶ τῶν παθῶν σώματος· τελείωσις δὲ τῆς οἰκείας ἐγζωῆς ἀνάληψις, πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὁμοίωσιν ἐπιτείνουσα· ταῦτα δὲ εὐφυΐα ἀρίστη καὶ ἀλήθεια κάλλιστα ἀνευρίζουσα· ἡ μὲν τὴν καθαρσίαν τῶν παθῶν ἐξεργάζουσα· ἡ δὲ τὸ θεῖον κάλλος, εὐφυῶς ἔχουσα, ἀφοσιοῦται.

Hence

Hence is that little leſs than inſpired heat or rapture of *Tully*; *When the ſoul, having diſcovered and entertained virtue, has extinguiſhed its fondneſs for, and indulgence of the body, and ſtifled luſt as the reproach and ſtain of its honour and beauty, and hath put off all dread of death and ruin*, &c. *What can be ſaid, or as much as fancied, more bleſſed than the ſtate of ſuch a man?* Nay, after all, the greateſt patrons and abettors of pleaſure did ever acknowledge this moderation in our paſſions and enjoyments indiſpenſibly neceſſary to our happineſs.

Cùm animus cognitis perceptiſque virtutibus à corporis obſequio, indulgentiaque diſceſſerit, voluptatemque ſicut labem decoris oppreſſerit, omnemque mortis doloriſque timorem effugerit, ſocietatemque charitatis colerit cum ſuis, omneſque natura conjunctos ſuos duxerit, cultumque deorum & puram religionem ſuſceperit, & exacuerit illum, ut oculorum ſic ingenii aciem ad bona diligenda & rejicienda contraria. Quid eò dici aut excogitari poterit beatius? *L.* 2. *de Leg.*

Nil admirari prope res eſt una Numici,
Solaque poſſit facere ac ſervare beatos.

Horat.

Nought to admire's the thing alone that can
Cauſe and preſerve the happineſs of man.

And 'tis well known, how much the followers of *Epicurus* gloried in his abſtinence; that theſe voluptuaries ſhould preſcribe and practiſe the doctrine of mortification! but this they were compelled to by the irreſiſtible force of reaſon: For how can he, who doats upon the world, and melts in ſoft and ſenſual pleaſures, be able to ſecure the repoſe of his mind againſt

thoſe melancholy alterations which may daily, and ſome time or other will certainly, befal himſelf and his enjoyments? On what foundation can the peace or liberty of his mind be eſtabliſhed? or can he be happy, who is diſtreſſed by every change of weather, and is divided and diſtracted between numerous contrary paſſions, and a ſlave to each?

To come to a concluſion; the ſcripture is ſo far from denying, that it does affirm the poſſibility of attaining happineſs: Nor are the ſufferings of confeſſors and martyrs, or the doctrine of mortification, any prejudice to this aſſertion: for neither affliction nor mortification are inconſiſtent with the true happineſs of man. That affliction is not, the example of thoſe very martyrs and confeſſors triumphing over it does ſufficiently evince: that mortification is not, is unanimouſly confeſſed by the ſuffrages of ſuch as were conducted by the light of nature; and of ſuch too, as were entirely dovoted to the pleaſures of this life, and that upon undeniable grounds. I have now ſpoke to all thoſe objections which ſeem to oppoſe and aſſault my poſition of the poſſibility of attaining happineſs, with any ſhew of reaſon, or pretence of divine authority. It is now high time I ſhould proceed to anſwer thoſe, who againſt this aſſertion oppoſe, not reaſons and arguments, but obſervation and experience.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of matter of fact and experience.

The ſtate of the poor. The gay and ſilly. The buſy. Princes. The learned; whether happy. The happineſs of the devout queſtioned, and demonſtrated by inſtances.

AFTER all the pains I have taken in the firſt ſection to demonſtrate, that the purſuit and ſearch after happineſs is a rational undertaking, an employment becoming the nature and ſtate of man: and, after all that I have taken in this ſecond, to demonſtrate the poſſibility of attaining it, and to diſperſe all objections to the contrary; there remains ſtill one objection, which, if true, were ſufficient to diſcourage the endeavours, and chill the heat of the moſt virtuous and reſolved ambition; which is this:

'Tis true, happineſs may be found in ſpeculation; but rarely, if ever, in poſſeſſion and fruition. The number of the fortunate and happy is extremely ſmall; and moſt men, if not all, when they have worn life to its laſt period, may give that account of it which the aged (and as others, no doubt, thought happy) patriarch did of his to *Pharaoh*, *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*, Gen. xxvii. But it moves me not ſo much to hear this from the mouth of a ſhepherd, who

from his youth led a laborious and unsettled life: but when I read the mournful poems of *Job*, the discontents and melancholy of *Solomon*, men no less eminent for wisdom and philosophy, than for their worldly glory and prosperity; when I read them bewailing the lot of mankind, unable to reflect upon it without a mixture of indignation, contempt, and womanish sorrow; I cannot but acknowledge, that I am shrewdly tempted to despair of happiness, as of something too great and divine to make its abode upon earth; and to look upon all the fine discourses that men make of it, only as so many flights of a bold fancy. Happiness! What is it? or where is it? In what distant coasts or unknown regions does it dwell? Who, and where are the fortunate? Who, and where are the darlings of heaven, to whose lot it happens? Shall we, like *Bajazet*, in a melancholy humour, think poor, silly, lazy peasants happy? *O happy shepherd, who hadst neither* Sebestia *nor* Orthobales *to lose*. (Knowles's *Turkish Hist.*)

Poor, whether happy.

As if secure beggary and slothful want were happiness: happy thus might I call the man born blind; he has no eyes to lose.

The gay and silly, whether happy.

Or, shall we call the gaudy swarm, which (like flies and insects in gleams of sun-shine) do buz and flutter in the rays and warmth of greatness and prosperity? Shall we call these happy? Ah! these are they that furnish theatres and poets with tragick stories.

Amongst

Amongſt theſe, reſtleſs paſſions, contemptible levity, ungovernable inſolence, wither'd and meagre envy, wandring luſt, empty pride, loud and ſenſeleſs confidence, and finally, ſhameful and fearful ſins, have their abode: and can we call thoſe happy, who are infeſted with ſuch legions of evils? *Miſerere tu ſelicium*; they are their own burthen, whilſt they are others envy.

The buſy, whether happy.

Shall we then call the buſy trading world happy? Alas! theſe would have thought it a happineſs, not to have needed to trade or toil; they love wealth, but moſt admire

Res non parta labore, ſed relicta. Mart.

Not gold they lab'ring dig themſelves in mines,
But what the toiling anceſtor reſigns
To his more happy iſſue.

Priam, whether happy.

If this be ſo, one would think I might boldly preſent you with the envy'd glory of mighty princes, as an unqueſtionable inſtance of happineſs. But, alas! the wiſeſt of the heathen gods preferr'd the happineſs of *Aglaus Sopkydius* before that of *Gyges!* And the wiſeſt of men, in his times at leaſt, preferred the happineſs of *Tellus* before that of *Cræſus!* And this ſentence ſeems not only to deny thoſe particular princes happy, but alſo to pronounce the very ſtate of royalty uncapable of happineſs, or at leaſt leſs capable than that

CHAP. II.

The particular and immediate cauſe of ill ſucceſs.

Three more particular and immediate cauſes of ill ſucceſs aſſigned. 1. *The frame and contexture of human nature.* 2. *Vicious education.* 3. *Vicious converſation; the natural effects of which are;* 1. *Inconſiderateneſs;* 2. *Falſe notions;* 3. *Ungovernableneſs and impotency of will;* 4. *Inſincerity;* 5. *Levity and inconſtancy. The whole exemplified.*

ALL this that I have ſaid in the former chapter, is plain and evident: we ſee and feel it, and bemoan it; but yet we live on in the ſame manner ſtill: Whence therefore is this infatuation of our underſtanding, that enſlaves us to falſe and irrational ends? Whence is that impotence of mind? Whence is that inſincerity that deludes our deſires, and produces nothing but feeble and unſucceſsful endeavours? Neither is this a difficult matter to diſcover: That we live and act irrationally, proceeds evidently from three cauſes. *Firſt*, The contexture and frame of our nature. *Secondly*, A vicious education. *Thirdly*, Vicious converſation.

The

The firſt ſpring or ſource of irrational deſires and actions, is the contrivance and compoſition of our nature: our ſenſual and brutiſh appetites have their foundation in our natural conſtitution, as well as our rational affections: for we are made up of body as well as ſoul. Hence is it that there is in man a doubtful fluctuation and indetermination to different objects; the reaſon of the mind, and the appetite of the body diſtracting and dividing him by their different propoſals; the impreſſions of ſenſe and repreſentations of reaſon ſucceſſively awakening in him very different, and generally very contrary deſires; whereas angels by the perfection, and beaſts by the imperfection of their nature, are determined and confined to their proper and neceſſary objects: man is left to a ſtrange uncertainty, undetermined by the reaſons of the mind, or the inſtinct or appetite of the body; mov'd indeed ſucceſſively by each, perfectly govern'd and over-rul'd by neither. But it were well for man, that the inclinations of theſe two different principles were ſo juſtly pois'd, that he were naturally left in a true liberty and pure indifference, equally able to follow the dictates of reaſon and the appetites of fleſh and blood: but, alas! how impetuous are the luſts of the body! how irreſiſtible are thoſe paſſions which the objects of ſenſe, aided by a carnal imagination, raiſe in us! on the other ſide, how cold are the repreſentations of reaſon, when we moſt need its aſſiſtance and authority! how faint and feeble the natural inclina-

The contexture of nature the firſt cauſe of an irrational life.

inclination of the soul to what is truly good and great! how remote and distant the rewards of virtue; and consequently how weak and cold their influence, and how faint and imperfect is the pleasure that attends it, abstracted from future rewards in all other minds besides those who are arrived in some sort at perfection! 'Tis true, at some seasons and upon some occasions, the remonstrances of conscience are so sharp, its reproaches so bitter, the disdain and confusion of the mind so unsufferable, that they render that which is a pleasure to the sense, a torment to the soul; and its agreeableness to our imagination cannot make amends for its harshness and contradiction to our reason. But, alas! these are but short-liv'd fits, which soon pass over; for business diverts, pleasure inchants, and repeated violence offer'd to our reason, stupifies and deadens the natural conscience; and what is worse than all this, a silly and vicious education does generally so corrupt our judgments, and prepossess us with vain and foolish affections, that the checks of conscience are extremely seldom, and extremely faint, unless the commission of some gross sin do awaken it by a deep and deadly wound. This is,

Education a second cause of man's misery.

2. A second cause of that general apostacy and defection from reason so notorious in the world, *A silly and vicious education.* How well does it fare with children, when they derive only their original corruption from their parents? Ah! how often are their weak dispositions to vice nurs'd and cherish'd by their parents

parents into an abſolute, uncontroulable, and ſettled tyranny? nay, what is worſe yet, how often are the ſeeds of virtue, thoſe towardly diſpoſitions which many bring into the world with them, choaked and ſtifled; not only by the neglect, not only by the indulgence, but even by the example and authority of parents?

——*Velocius & citius nos*
Corrumpunt vitiorum exempla domeſtica, magnis
Cùm ſubeant animos autoribus——

Juv. Sat. 14.

Ah, with what ſpeed muſt the infection ſpread,
When youth by parents crimes are warranted,
And tempted on to ſin!——

When corrupt inclination is ripen'd into a ſecond nature, when our innate weakneſſes and ſollies are confirmed by thoſe falſe principles, and that vicious confidence which we derive from education; then we are ſent into the world, left to our own diſpoſal, abandon'd to our own government: poor creatures! not only expoſed unarmed, ungarded, to temptations; but, like *Sampſon* to the *Philiſtines*, tied and bound too. Ah! could we ſo eaſily burſt our bonds as he did his! But whence ſhould we recover our loſt liberty?

Converſation, inſtead of being an aſſiſtance to us in our endeavours after happineſs, doth generally tend to promote our miſery. Philoſophy is not now the buſineſs of converſation; nor is friendſhip any

Converſation a third.

any way uſeful or ſerviceable to the great end of life: the ligament of ſociety is riot and revelling, or ſordid profit and intereſt, or, peradventure, folly, trifling and impertinence: theſe are the ties and bonds of our confederacies; ſo that whatever authority our friends and acquaintance have over us, whatever influence they have upon us, is employ'd to no other purpoſe, but to recommend and endear vice to us, to render it, if not beautiful and lovely to us, at leaſtwiſe leſs deformed and ugly than it is. Hence it is, that retirement is ſo generally recommended to thoſe who deſign to make any progreſs in true wiſdom; and ſuch as are truly virtuous, do ſo paſſionately complain of the diſadvantages they ſuffer by converſing with the world: for the truth is, wiſdom and goodneſs are ſuch unfaſhionable themes of diſcourſe, ſuch unuſual, nay, I may add, unwelcome ſubjects of entertainment, that the company deſerves now to be praiſed, which is only barren and unprofitable, not hurtful, and wherein we ſuffer no greater loſs than that of our time.

The effect of theſe three.

It is now eaſy to imagine, what fruit a corrupt nature muſt bring forth, when not only left deſtitute of neceſſary cultivation, but depraved yet more by a vicious education, and vicious converſation. What can all theſe together bring forth, but a loathſome brood of diſeaſes and vices; ſuch as theſe, raſhneſs, precipitancy, heedleſneſs, and unthoughtfulneſs; falſe notions, ungovernableneſs and impotence of

of will; insincerity, levity, and inconstancy; which are the plagues of human life, and the fatal obstacles of our tranquillity? For either they obstruct our true happiness, by preventing our search after it; or delude our search, by corrupting and perverting our understanding; or else they frustrate and defeat the influence of its discovery, by obstinate reluctances in the body, and an unhappy impotence in the mind: all this is manifest upon the most transient glance we can take of these particulars. To begin with want of consideration: this is a necessary effect of that corruption and depravation which ascribed to nature, education and conversation; the body, unaccustomed to obey, is impatient of deliberation when its pleasure is in view; and a taking imagination over-rules whatever weak plea reason makes: nay, what is worse, the very disuse of reason in men abandon'd to the conduct of custom, and sway'd by the enticement of inclination, and authority of example, bereaves them almost of the faculty itself: so that their life and actions are not the effects of judgment and deliberation; but injudicious, unweigh'd custom; or more rash, heedless, and precipitant passion. And can any man think, that when the meanest art and profession is not learned without right instruction or just diligence; wisdom, the great art of living happily, should be attained without as much as just consideration? When a man cannot grow rich or prosperous, without contrivance and industry, is

Inconsideration.

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the rewards of conformity to their precepts. And as it cannot ſurely be denied, but that that kingdom is moſt happy, which by juſt laws and a well-temper'd authority, is freed from thoſe fears and diſtractions, from thoſe miſchiefs and confuſions to which others are expoſed by anarchy or tyranny, by the inſolence of the multitude or the impotence of the prince: ſo it cannot be denied but that that man is moſt happy, whoſe well-ſettled peace is eſtabliſhed upon ſolid grounds of true wiſdom; being neither oppreſſed by the tyranny of ſuperſtition, nor vexed and diſquietted by the inſolence of unruly paſſions, to which the weakneſs of reaſon ſubjects men. As to religion, which is a third governing principle; this only propoſes a more perfect happineſs, and a more plain and direct way to it, than nature of itſelf could: it only relieves and recruits our natural power by that of grace, and increaſes the light of reaſon by a participation of new rays of revelation. If then happineſs be the great end which law and philoſophy, revelation and reaſon, God and man, do unanimouſly propoſe to us; how abſurd and palpable a contradiction were it to all thoſe, to deny the attainment of it poſſible.

The concluſion of this ſecond ſection.

To look back now upon this whole ſection, and ſum up the ſubſtance and force of it, 'tis this: God, who made us, made us on purpoſe to be happy: for what other deſign could in-

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finite love propoſe to itſelf in our creation? And propoſing to himſelf this end, he endowed us with faculties and capacities that might fit us for the contemplation and enjoyment of himſelf and his works: the world, provided by him for our entertainment, he filled with all things that could miniſter either to our neceſſities or delights. Here God has planted us, not as inhabitants, but ſojourners: for this is but our ſtate of probation; angels had their times of trial, ſo have men; here he would have us aſpire after, as near as we can, that life angels lead in heaven; for we are one day to be equal to them. Here he would have us learn and practiſe thoſe virtues which fit us for the ſociety and enjoyment of that kingdom wherein dwells righteouſneſs, for that is the bleſſed end and conſummation of all our endeavours, deſires, and hopes: but when we make heaven the abode, the ſeat of perfect happineſs, we do not thereby ſuppoſe that 'tis baniſhed from the earth; but rather, on the contrary, if that ſtate be the conſummation of all things, 'tis neceſſary to be concluded, that every ſtep we advance nearer to it, we mount and aſcend higher, in brighter, calmer, and purer regions. Heaven is like the glorious building, whoſe acceſs is full of delight and beauty: for as that youth which precedes our manhood has its ſweetneſs, its beauty, its natural perfection and pleaſure; ſo has this mortal ſtate, which precedes our angelical, its proper degree of perfection and bleſſedneſs: and this is no ſmall one neither: for, as we are created but a little lower than the angels, in reſpect to the

dignity of our nature; ſo ſurely our happineſs begins nearly to approach and reſemble theirs, when our mind, fill'd with divine truths, charity and hopes, becomes free, generous, reſolved, conſtant, chearful, meek, gentle, devout, heavenly; when it has ſo accuſtomed itſelf to virtue, and familiarly acquainted itſelf with heaven, that the ſins and pleaſures of the ſenſual part of the world look like the manners and entertainments, not only of a foreign, but barbarous and impoveriſhed country; and when, laſtly, by its frequent retirements from the body, and daily commerce with rational and ſpiritual pleaſures, it not only aſſerts its ſovereignty over it, but begins to live ſo independent of it, that at the laſt, when it ſhall in death mount up upon the wings of pure flame to heaven, it ſhall not ſuffer as if the body needed to be torn from it; but ſhall let it fall as *Elijah* did his mantle. Thoſe complaints therefore which we make againſt our preſent ſtate, and thoſe reproaches with which we outrage and vilify our nature, are falſe and unjuſt; for we are by God created and deſigned for happineſs, and this happineſs God has been pleaſed to put in our own power, to place within our reach. There is no fate, but what God has made us ourſelves arbiters of; we lie under no neceſſity, no fatality, but what our own vices betray us to: nor do we ſtand in need of the indulgences of fortune; the tranquillity and pleaſure of a virtuous man is an image of God's own; it ſprings from within, not from without. 'Tis true, there are difficulties which obſtruct our progreſs to happineſs; but

but they are ſuch as all wiſe and good men have conquer'd: 'Tis true, nature labours under its infirmities, that is, ſenſual propenſions and inclinations; but it is ſtrengthened and ſupported by reaſon, by revelation, by grace. We may fall ('tis true) a ſacrifice to God's wrath; but it muſt be after we have lived long in contempt of his mercy, and obſtinate defiance of his grace. Methinks theſe conſiderations ſhould raiſe and exalt the mind of man; they ſhould inſpire us with deſires and hopes worthy of rational and immortal ſouls; like the *Iſraelites* when they marched out of *Egypt*, we ſhould dream of nothing, but triumph, glory, and happineſs.

SECT. III.

The cauſes and remedies of man's unſucceſsfulneſs in his purſuit after happineſs.

CHAP. I.

The general cauſe of ill ſucceſs. Deviation from reaſon, the general cauſe of man's ill ſucceſs. The effects of which are, 1. *The propoſal of falſe ends.* 2. *Coldneſs in purſuit of our true ends.*

WERE the happy like * *Tully*'s wiſe man, a mere idea, ſomething no where to be found but in the characters and deſcriptions

* Quem adhuc nos quidem vidimus neminem, ſed philoſophorum ſententiis qualis futuras ſit, ſi modò aliquando fuerit, exponitur. *Tuſc. queſt. l.* 2.

tions which philoſophers give us of him, this were an unconquerable diſcouragement: no briſkneſs of wit, no charms of fancy, no force of eloquence, no height of ſpirit, or height of confidence, were ſufficient to remove it, and to engage men in ſuch a deſperate and unaccountable enterpriſe, as this ſuppoſition would render the purſuit of happineſs: for how fond and groundleſs a preſumption were it, to purſue that which all mankind had ever as unſucceſsfully as earneſtly and indefatigably attempted? I have therefore endeavoured with all my might, in the former chapter, to free mens minds from any ſuſpicion of fears of this kind, anſwering all objections that might ſeem to repreſent miſery fatal, or happineſs unattainable, and by undeniable proofs confirming the oppoſite truth. But if this be true, that happineſs is attainable; and if it be as true, as certainly it is, that there needs no eloquence to enkindle in any man the deſires of happineſs, or to incite and ſpur him on to endeavours its attainment, all mankind being carried on towards it by natural, and therefore conſtant and paſſionate inclinations; will it not be natural to demand, Whence is it that ſo few are happy? Whence is it, that miſery and trouble, affliction and ſorrow fill almoſt every boſom? Not only no kingdom or city; but no town, no village, no family, I might almoſt add, no one particular perſon, being exempt or free; no place or perſon is privileg'd againſt grief and trouble; it invades the tribunal of judges, the thrones of princes; and, what is almoſt as ſacred as either, the retirements and cloſets of the devout and

learned; nay, ſcarcely is the church and the altar a ſecure ſanctuary againſt it.

This will not be difficult to comprehend, if we do thoroughly weigh, and ſoberly conſider the true cauſes of man's miſery; but the particular and diſtinct diſcuſſion of each of theſe will fall in its proper place in the following treatiſes; and therefore I ſhall diſcourſe of them here only generally and briefly, as the nature of an introduction requires.

Many are the particular cauſes of human miſery; but they may be all reduced to this univerſal and immediate one, namely, *That we do not live conformably to our reaſon.*

Deviation from reaſon the general cauſe of miſery.

——*quid enim ratione timemus aut cupimus*——

When do our affections ſpring from, or when are they governed by reaſon? When are our deſires or fears, our joys or ſorrows wiſe, and juſt, and rational, and holy? How frequently are our actions nothing elſe but the brutiſh and blind ſallies and fooliſh paſſions, and our lives are generally nothing elſe but the wanderings and rambles of deluded imaginations? How commonly do we act what we ourſelves do condemn? And how commonly doth the whole courſe of our lives diſpleaſe ourſelves as much as others; and yet we live on in contradiction to our reaſon, and ſometimes to our inclinations too? How unlike are we in our converſation, to ourſelves in retirement? How unlike are we in the devotion of our cloſets, to ourſelves in the employment of

our ſeveral profeſſions? How calm, ſedate, wiſe, holy, and reſolved in the one? How anxious and uneaſy; how fooliſh, earthly, and inconſtant in the other? But in nothing does our deviation from reaſon more evidently appear, than in two things:

Firſt, In our propoſing to ourſelves falſe and irrational ends of life; and *Secondly*, In our inſincerity in purſuing the true and rational one, that is, happineſs. As to the *Firſt*, who ſees not how the life of man is perverted, the force and tendency of nature crook'd and bow'd to deſigns utterly unſuitable to the capacities and faculties of a rational mind, and to the great end of our creation? Who can look into the life of man, and not eaſily conclude, that his chief aim is wealth and greatneſs, not happineſs? Or, which is ſomething ſillier, that his deſign is ſome unneceſſary accompliſhment, not virtue and goodneſs; or a vain eſteem and popular applauſe, not the peace and wiſdom of his mind? Who ſees not how greedily men purſue thoſe ſenſual ſatisfactions, which naturally tend to enſlave the ſoul, and to extinguiſh the rational pleaſure and vigour of our minds? In a word, wealth, and honour, and power, and pleaſure, are the idols of mankind; theſe are the things for which they live, for which they love and value life: theſe are the glorious poſſeſſions which enflame our emulations and our induſtry: Theſe are the things which the unfortunate man envies, and the fortunate honours: Theſe are the things which

This deviation diſcovers itſelf.

1. *In falſe ends.*

which diſtinguiſh and diſcriminate mankind into their ſeveral ranks and degrees; the contempt or eſteem of the world; the reſpects and affronts; the love and hate of mankind being ever proportion'd to the degrees of wealth and power, which they fancy others poſſeſſed of. To theſe noble ends the ſage and experienced parent trains up his young ones, inſtilling daily into them all the ſuitable maxims of covetouſneſs and ambition; and judging of their proficiency and hopefulneſs, by the progreſs they make towards theſe ends; that is, the more enſlaved they are, the more hopeful, the more promiſing is their youth.

2. Coldneſs in purſuit of our true end.

Nor are men more zealous in purſuing the falſe, than cold and inſincere in purſuing the true ends of life, virtue and happineſs. This is too too evident to any one who ſhall conſider how fond we are of our diſeaſes and our errors; how impatient of that inſtruction or reproof, which tends to cure, undeceive, and diſabuſe us; how ſluggiſh we are in the ſtudy of important truths; how liſtleſs and remiſs in the uſe of thoſe means which conduce to virtue, to the freeing of our minds, and to the confirming our reſolutions. And therefore, laſtly, how light, wavering, and unconſtant we are in the practice of thoſe things which right reaſon convinces us to be our duty.

to merit; nor did I think myſelf incapable of practiſing all the ſubtle humble arts of candidates and dependents, could I once prevail with myſelf to ſtoop to them: but when the toil and difficulty, and meanneſs too of this attempt had given me a little diſguſt; and the pleaſures of friendſhip and fortune (by neither of which have I ever been utterly deſerted) encounter'd my natural inclinations to eaſe and ſoftneſs, I ſoon exchang'd my former notion of happineſs for a more calm and quiet one; I began to think it wiſe to live to-day, and to prefer my preſent bleſſings in poſſeſſion, before the uncertain future ones of opinion and expectation. I wiſhed for an opportunity to retire from every thing that might awaken my ambition, or interrupt my quiet; and thought, that in a lazy ſhade and obſcure retreat I might with moſt freedom and trueſt contentment enjoy myſelf a cheap pleaſure, and an humble friend, and laugh at the ambitious reſtleſs part of mankind.

Sometimes ſpringing a thought of light, and loſt in the pleaſure of a ſpeculation, I have reſolved to devote myſelf entirely to a ſtudious life; I adored the memory of thoſe great ſouls, whoſe works have given them an immortality here below; I looked upon the learned (as *Epicurus* words it) as gods amongſt men; I did not queſtion but the contemplation which once ſeemed to me to be the buſineſs of angels, muſt needs be the joy and delight of man; but, alas! that I muſt ſay it, all that learning which is purchaſed with toil and difficulty, is but a

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vain and uncertain amuſement of the mind; it has much of pomp and oſtentation in it, but is of very little uſe: I wou'd it were not true, that thoſe parts of learning, which are of moſt uſe, have leaſt of certainty and demonſtration; and thoſe, which can juſtly pretend to no certainty, make men the worſt return of their ſtudies, and are of leaſt uſe. I have obſerv'd accordingly, that the moſt learned are not always the moſt ſerviceable to the world; not only for this reaſon, but alſo thoughtfulneſs and retirement rendering men very commonly as unfit for as averſe to buſineſs, bereaving them of that ſufficiency and ſkill, that addreſs and preſence of mind, which is not to be gained but by converſation and experience; and it was eaſy for me to remark, that the active and buſy man was not only more ſkilful, but more eloquent too than the contemplative, as having a much clearer inſight into the humours and paſſions of men, and the ſecret ſprings and intereſts by which they are moved, and being able to manage them with a more popular dexterity, and more cleanly, genteel insinuation. And now I began to eſteem of learning as a pretty ornament of life, but not fit to be the ſupport of it; I thought it might ſerve to fill the void and empty ſpaces, but not to be the buſineſs and employment of it.

I have been ſometimes ravithed with the beauty of a noble action, and reſolved to lead a life ſevere and virtuous, ſpent not in private eaſe and lazy diverſions, but in the honour and pleaſure of doing good. But, good God!

how weak is nature! How ſlight are ſuch impreſſions! How numerous the temptations! How prevalent the inclinations which carry us another way!

This has been a long time my ſtate, toſſed on uncertain ſeas, and hoiſting ſail to every wind that blew; and, I find, that neither greatneſs of mind nor fortune doth raiſe men above this inconſtancy: for I meet with my own reflections, my own paſſions in the excellent *Seneca* (*de tranquilitate animi*); only the character of himſelf he there preſents us with, is expreſſed with more life and briſkneſs, and exalted above this of mine, as was the nature and ſtation of that great man above mine. I cannot ſay, that I have yet made my port; but I have diſcovered it; and I ſail, though ſlowly, yet in a direct line, having my happineſs, my haven all along in ken.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The cure of the former maladies.

Comformity to reaſon the general cure. This conformity muſt appear in two things; 1. *In the propoſal, or right and true ends*; 2. *In the purſuit of them with zeal and conſtancy. Inferred from all how we are to treat the body. What our education. What our converſation ought to be.*

FROM this account of the riſe and progreſs of man's miſery, 'tis eaſy to infer what it is wherein the happineſs of this preſent life conſiſts, or, at leaſt, what the univerſal and immediate cauſe of it is; namely, a conformity of our minds and lives to true reaſon and ſound philoſophy. This is a ſtate of light and knowledge, of peace and ſecurity, of laſting and rational delight: this inveſts the underſtanding in its juſt ſovereignty and dominion, and reſtores the will to its true liberty; this makes the proſpect of the future taking and inviting, and our reflection on the time paſt eaſy and comfortable; this lays a ſolid foundation for our reliance on the merits and interceſſion of our Mediator, and raiſes our hope as high as heaven; this prevents our misfortunes and calamities, or, what is more happy, enables us to conquer them: in a word,

The nature or univerſal and immediate cauſe of happineſs inferred.

this makes us great in life, but much more great and venerable in death; righteouſneſs and goodneſs revealing its beauty and glory moſt then, when all things elſe do ſhrink and fade.

Two general rules for attaining happineſs inferred.

We ſee the happineſs that ſprings from our conformity and ſubjection to reaſon; and 'tis eaſy from thoſe two things, wherein eſpecially, I have declared the ſinners deviation from reaſon to conſiſt, to infer, what we muſt do, if we will live rationally. Firſt, *We muſt propoſe to ourſelves a wiſe and rational end of life.* Secondly, *We muſt purſue this end with life and ſpirit and conſtancy.* Theſe, I lay down as the moſt comprehenſive rules for the attainment of happineſs: I will therefore ſay ſomething of each, but briefly and in general terms, as the nature of this treatiſe requires.

Firſt, We muſt propoſe to ourſelves a rational and wiſe end of life; that is, the true happineſs of a rational creature: When we have done this, when our underſtandings are fully convinced and perſuaded of the excellence and neceſſity of it, and when we have poſſeſſed our minds with a ſacred reverence, a firm and devout love for it; this, like the eaſtern ſtar to the *Magi*, will lead us through all the windings and turnings of this life to *Bethlehem* and happineſs: this will ſoon diſengage us from that labyrinth of contradictious deſires and wild opinions, in which the fool and ſinner is endleſſly entangled. When we have done this, we ſhall find every place a ſchool, every one we converſe with a tutor, and every paſſage

of

of our life, or another's, full of inſtruction: not a look, whether chearful or melancholy; not a word, whether wiſe or fooliſh; not a ſigh, that an oppreſſed heart vents; not a joy, that ſmiles in the face, but will teach us philoſophy, ſhew us the uſe and beauty of divine truth and divine virtue: for in the vicious we ſhall ſee what falſe and fading pleaſures, what idle fears, what vain ſorrows, falſe principles, and the tyranny of ſin fills the minds with: in the good we ſhall ſee what true peace virtue creates in the mind, what conſtancy and majeſty in the life, what courage and hopes it inſpires in affliction, what magnanimity and humility in preſperity, and, in a word, what light, what ſerenity it difuſſes thro' the whole man: we ſhall ſee in many inſtances every day what the miſchief of irrational deſires and ungovernable paſſions are; and, on the contrary, how great the advantages, how charming the beauty of truth and virtue, of wiſdom, and due government, and regulation of our paſſions: nor is the inſtruction and illumination of our underſtanding promoted by every accident which falls under our obſervation, and by all ſorts of people with whom we converſe: the only advantage which we ſhall reap from the prefixing ourſelves a rational end of life, and the poſſeſſing our ſouls with the love of it (for when we have done this, we ſhall be actually freed from the greater part at leaſt of the troubles and calamities of life;) we ſhall be raiſed above all ſenſeleſs, filly deſires, and conſequently above all ſenſeleſs, filly vexations

and

and griefs, and unmanly complaints: for when we have ſet our hearts upon true and rational happineſs, how unneceſſary, nay, how deſpicable will moſt of theſe things appear which we now admire and covet: we ſhall not then think it reaſonable to ſigh and toil for this houſe, or that land, for this preferment, or that trade, this honour or that beauty; for theſe are no eſſential, no neceſſary ingredients of a rational happineſs. Nor is this all; thy joys and pleaſures will grow and increaſe upon thee; for by approaching every day nearer and nearer to thy great end, thou wilt be wonderfully ſurpriſed with freſh delight, whilſt thou doſt behold the fruit of thy travail, the advantage of thy philoſophy, and the daily increaſe of thy wealth: thou wilt ſee thyſelf, like a thriving plant, grow up daily more ſtrong and beautiful: the toil of other ſorts to no happy end. The covetous man grows not richer by heaping up, nor the ambitious man greater by riſing higher; or, at leaſt, neither grows happier by being either richer or greater: but thou wilt every day grow wiſer by ſtudy, more virtuous by practice, and calmer and happier by both. O! to what a height and perfection will thy pleaſure riſe, when thy ſtore ſhall grow big enough to feaſt and entertain, not thyſelf only, but all men elſe; when the thirſty ſhall come and drink at thy ſtreams, and the ſcorched ſhall refreſh themſelves under thy ſhade; when thou, led by the ſame Spirit with our great Lord and Maſter, ſhalt open the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, ſhall caſt out devils,

devils, and ſtrengthen the feet of the lame; I mean, when thou ſhalt teach the fooliſh wiſdom; when thou ſhalt perſuade and charm the obſtinate; when thou ſhalt deliver the unclean and paſſionate from the evil ſpirits, the vices that poſſeſs them; and when thou ſhalt teach the enſlaved and impotent ſinner how to overcome the world, the fleſh and the devil; thou wilt then indeed, as thou art the image, ſo do the works of God; thou wilt be a heavenly and titular, tho' mortal, angel amongſt men; and wherever thou doſt, there wiſdom, and virtue, and happineſs will dwell too. But to attain to this ſtate, 'tis not only neceſſary to prefix ourſelves a rational end of life: but alſo,

Secondly, We muſt purſue this end with life, and ſpirit, and conſtancy. It is not a good fit, or a devout paſſion, that will make us either virtuous or happy; there muſt go more than this to conquer an ill habit, or implant a good one: 'tis not one briſk ſally, or one warm charge, that will ſubdue the world and fleſh, and put us into an entire poſſeſſion of victory and ſecurity; no, when warmth and paſſion have made a proſperous impreſſion on the enemy, a ſober patience muſt make good the ground we have gained; a ſteady and reſolved courage muſt urge and preſs the advantage to an iſſue: without vigour, patience and conſtancy, to carry us ſtill forwards, the warmth and paſſion with which we begin the courſe of virtue, will ſtand us in little ſtead. Ah! how many have march'd out of *Egypt*, and periſh'd in the wilderneſs! How many have wrecked within

it probable he ſhould grow happy by inadvertency and chance? It is impoſſible.

Falſe notions.

For innumerable will be the falſe and pernicious notions which ſuch a one, corrupted and depraved, raſh and unadviſed, muſt be betrayed into, and confirm'd in; there is no principle ſo falſe, no practice ſo abſurd, which ſuch do not readily entertain. Hence 'tis that men do ſo generally live by rote; that mens principles are the faſhionable ones of the neighbourhood or nation; that their manner of life takes that ſhape which their rank and quality, and the chance of their converſation gives it; and their very religion itſelf is a native commodity of the ſoil they are planted in. Hence 'tis finally, that men are unrighteous and wicked, careleſs and unconcern'd, notwithſtanding all the calls and invitations, all the rewards and menaces of the goſpel, convictions of conſcience, impulſes of grace, mercies, threats, and judgments of God: and covetouſneſs, luxury, uncleanneſs, prophaneneſs, ambition are as conſtantly practiſed, in court and city, as condemned in the pulpit and preſs: nor is it to be expected otherwiſe; for falſe notions give countenance and authority to our follies, and fortify us in our wretched miſcarriages againſt the aſſaults of law and reaſon, of conſcience and God himſelf: no condition is ſo deſperately forlorn as that of ſin and folly, backed and authorized by inveterate principles! Theſe render our very induſtry not only uſeleſs and unſerviceable, but even fatal and deſtructive to our happineſs: theſe

these defeat the very tendency of our nature towards happiness; and, turning it into a wrong channel, make it run with violence towards our misery.

These help to render our passions both numerous and ungovernable, by presenting some things as evils which are not, and by augmenting real evils beyond their natural proportion: and herein consists the very essence and being of human misery, or, at least, a part of it; when our own folly increases both the number and weight of evils, and our numberless passions do exceed all just and natural bounds. And this is a constant truth, the less understanding there is any man, the more violent is his passion; the passion of a fool being like the zeal of a bigot, the more blind, the more furious. All this makes good the observation of the poet:

Ungovernableness and impotence of will.

Non qui Sidonio contendere calli lus Ostro,
Nescit Aquinatem potentia vellera fucum,
Certius accipiet damnum, propiusque medullis,
Quam qui non poterit vero distinguere falsum.
Horat. Lib. 1. Ep. 10.

Not the deluded trader, who doth buy
Counterfeit Aquin *for the* Tyrian *dye;*
His folly shall more surely or dearly rue,
Than he who does false notions take for true.

Insincerity is another fruit of the corruption of our nature, and the depravation of education and conversation.

Insincerity.

tion. This is that which makes us lazy in our ſearch after truth, and partial in the examination of our opinions and actions: for when the bent of our nature runs towards carnal pleaſures, and this is confirmed by education and falſe notices of things, we ſhall be apt to take up and careſs ourſelves with preſent, eaſy, and ready entertainments. We ſhall not extend our care or proſpect very far, but be content to enjoy the ſweet in every preſent circumſtance and event, without regard to their future tendency, which was the happineſs, if my memory deceive me not, of the *Cyrenaicks*. The ſame diſtemper prevailing, we ſhall be apt to think every thing healthful that is pleaſant, and eaſily admit thoſe principles moſt true, which are moſt greatful to appetites. 'Tis not therefore to be wonder'd at, if the ſame humour which makes us gready of embracing, makes us obſtinate in defending errors: for the ſame fondneſs and partiality renders us incapable of inſtruction, and impatient of advice, though deſign'd by the moſt faithful affection, and manag'd with the moſt prudent tenderneſs.

Fidis offendar medicis, iraſcar amicis,
Cur me funeſto properant arcere veterno?
Quæ nocuere ſequar, fugiam quæ pro fore credam.
Horat. Lib. 1. Ep. 8.

The plainneſs of phyſicians, and of friends,
Tho' by affection mov'd, and truth, offends;
Can't I enjoy my fatal reſt for you?
Let me alone my ruin to purſue,
And fly my happineſs.——

It

It is eaſy now to judge what muſt be the ſtate of that man who is inſincere and falſe to himſelf in all his deliberations, and obſtinate in the defence of his errors; who is partial in all his own reflections, and impatient of the faithful reflections of others: How is it probable, that that man ſhould attain any rational happineſs, who is incapable of uſing his own reaſon aright, or enjoying the benefit of others?

Levity and inconſtancy.

But it is not the only miſchief we ſuffer by theſe diſeaſes of the mind, that they render us incapable of diſcovering true happineſs; they do alſo diſable us to purſue it when diſcover'd with that earneſtneſs and vigour which the importance of the thing requires: for they muſt needs beget in us a ſlothful remiſſneſs in our endeavours, and an unhappy levity and inconſtancy in all our deſigns and purpoſes. 'Tis very improbable that we ſhould be ſteady and immoveable in thoſe purpoſes which are not founded upon clear and ſolid reaſon; or zealous in ſuch as are encountered with violent oppoſition from ourſelves. * Hence 'tis, that the ſcenes of man's life are ſo various, ſo frequently chang'd, that every man does ſo often ſhift his perſon, and appear a very different actor on the ſtage. Thus we meet with Epi-

* Quidem alternis Vatinii, alternis Catones; & modò parùm illis Severus eſt Curius parùm pauper Fabricius, parùm frugi & contentus vili Tubero. Modò Licinium divitiis Apicium Cœnis Mecænatem deliciis provocant. Maximum judicium eſt mutæ mentis fluctuatio, & inter ſimulationem virtutem, amoremque vitiorum, aſſidua jactatio. *Sen. Epiſt.* 120.

curean and Stoick, clergyman and merchant, devotee and ſtateſman, enthuſiaſt and paraſite, all acted in their turn by the ſelf-ſame man; who is toſſed to and fro by the ſudden ſallies or guſts of various deſires and paſſions. Nor is it any man's wit or ſagacity that turns him into all theſe different ſhapes, but his vice and folly: for being ignorant of the true good, the true happineſs of man, he catches at fleeting ſhadows, and courts thin airy dreams, and uncertain apparitions: and therefore daily ſets up new projects, and thoſe too repugnant to the old: and thus man wearieth out himſelf by vain and unſucceſsful, becauſe unconſtant, vaniſhing attempts. This were tolerable, did it befal us only in temporal things, whoſe emptineſs makes our ſucceſs itſelf fruſtration and diſappointment: But, alas! we ſuffer the ſame thing in the weighty concern of our virtue and happineſs: our religious purpoſes do generally die ſtrangled in the birth: and all our glorious deſigns daſh and break themſelves to pieces againſt the next difficulty or temptation; and yet, relapſed into a ſtate of folly, and ſin, and danger, we would again return to that narrow path, whoſe ſteep and rough aſcent diſcouraged us: wandring in night and fog, and ſtorm, fain would we reach the happy region where calm light and chearful day does ever dwell: plainly, and without a metaphor, when we reſolve to be good and virtuous, we are kept from it by the ſeeming eaſe and pleaſure of ſin, and the hardſhips neceſſary to be undergone in the attainments of

virtue: and yet the remorſe and danger, and diſſatisfaction, which do always accompany a negligent and ſinful life, makes us wiſh for the peace and comfort, the ſecurity and rewards of virtue. But, oh! how ſeldom do we proceed further than wiſhes, or ſome attempts more lazy or diſpirited than our wiſhes? The reaſon is plain, virtue is more rational, vice is more grateful: the underſtanding is convinc'd, but the will is enſlav'd; *the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh.* A ſinner cannot purchaſe the pleaſures of the body, without the checks and reproaches of the mind; and this makes him unſteady and irreſolute in all his purpoſes. Would you ſee an inſtance of the whole matter? You feel it better than I can deſcribe it; and yet 'tis not difficult to make a tolerable repreſentation of that, which I have in myſelf often proved, and often bewailed. Nor can I ſee, why I ſhould bluſh to own thoſe frailties which are ſo incident to human nature, that the greateſt glory and happineſs of mortal man is, not to have been never ſubject to them, but to have conquered them.

The whole exemplified.

One while, moved by the gaze and wonder, the reſpect and reverence with which the world treats greatneſs, and by thoſe opportunities of pleaſure which I ſaw wealth and power put into mens hands; I reſolved to rouze all the ſtrength, to employ all the force and power of mind and body for the attainment of wealth and greatneſs. I flatter'd myſelf, I knew how

CHAP. III.

Inferences drawn from the former chapter. First, *To cultivate our reason. The use of which is more particularly insisted on with respect to three things; that is, the employing our faculties, the bearing evil, and enjoying good.* Secondly, *To renounce every thing that opposes it; as fancy, passion, example, custom.* Thirdly, *That 'tis impossible to be happy in every state.* Fourthly, *That a long life is a great blessing, consider'd either in itself, or with respect to the life to come.* p. 21.

SECT. II

Of the different kinds of life. p. 32.

CHAP. I.

The conveniencies and the inconveniencies of the active and contemplative life. The active more necessary. The several grounds on which men determine their choice, that is, interest, providence, inclination, &c. p. 33.

CHAP. II.

Of the civil life, or the active life of a gentleman.

Sect. 1. *The gentleman's obligations to an active life, from the consideration of what he owes to God, to his country, to himself. The active life not injurious to the gentleman's pre-eminence, liberty,*

liberty, pleasure. Sect. 2. *The regulation of the civil life,* i. e. *the knowledge and virtues necessary to this sort of life. The constancy required throughout the whole course of the gentleman's life. Some vacations from business necessary, and to what ends.* p. 37.

CHAP. III.

Of the trading or negociating life.

Sect. 1. *Rules relating to success in trade.* First, *That the trader be industrious.* Secondly, *That he be not above his profession.*

Sect. 2. *Rules relating to his* religion. First, *The trade must be a lawful one.* Secondly, *It must be managed with justice, truth, and charity.* Thirdly, *It must not interfere with religion.* Fourthly, *The trader ought to propose to himself wise and rational ends; such as are a* competency *for himself and family; the charitable assistance of others; timely retirement or retreat from the bustle and distraction of too much business.* p. 73.

CHAP. IV.

Of a contemplative life.

For whom this chapter is design'd; what kind of life is to be understood by a contemplative one. Sect. 1. *The ends or reasons warranting the choice of such a life;* First, Enjoyment: *Secondly,* Self-preservation *from the assaults of* temptation: *Thirdly, The better serving the* world: *Fourthly,*

Fourthly, A more entire dedication of one's self to God. Sect. 2. *The conditions, or qualifications necessary to a* contemplative life: *First, A* plentiful fortune: *Secondly, A* peaceable *and* humble disposition: *Thirdly, A* good understanding. Sect. 3. *The regulation of a* contemplative life; *with respect, First, To* time: *Secondly, To* place: *Thirdly, To the* exercise *or* employment *of a* retir'd life: *The* conclusion, *containing the pleasure and happiness of a* contemplative life. p. 93.

SECT. III.

Of the right husbanding or prolonging life. p. 123

CHAP. I.

The usual arts of preventing or retarding the decays of nature, and lessening the fears of death, exploded; and better substituted in their room. Physick, instead of which, courage and contempt of death. Paint, &c. *instead of which, the beauties of the mind. Children, instead of which, good works, and so forth. Surviving honour not wholly rejected, but a true immortality preferred.* p. 124

CHAP. II.

Of lengthening life.

Sect. 1. *The* fatality *of the period of life refuted. And objections from scripture, from astrological predictions,*

predictions, from divine preſcience, anſwered. A ſort of fate admitted. Sect. 2. *Of the ways of prolonging life. Firſt, Chearfulneſs of mind.* Secondly, *Health of body.* Thirdly, *The protection of God and man.* Sect. 3. *Objections againſt this laſt aſſertion from ſuch texts, as aſſert the promiſcuous events of things, and from the early death ſometimes of the righteous, anſwered.* p. 132

CHAP. III.

Of improving life, or living much in little time. *What is to be underſtood by improving or exalting life, and the advantages of this notion. Three ways of improving life.* Sect. 1. *By perfecting nature. Man and life mean things, till wiſdom and virtue ſtamp a value on them. This particularly exemplified with* reſpect to knowledge, *and the due regulation of the* affections. Sect. 2. *By beginning to live betimes, or at leaſt immediately. No objection againſt becoming preſently wiſe and happy, but the difficulty of becoming ſo. An exhortation; addreſſed, Firſt, To the young; Secondly, To thoſe advanc'd in years. Cloſed with a reflection on the day of judgment.* Sect. 3. *By avoiding all thoſe things that are injurious to life; as ſloth, impertinence, remiſneſs, or coldneſs in religion; levity and inconſtancy. Some other directions deferred to the following treatiſes.* p. 158

HUMAN

HUMAN LIFE:

OR, A SECOND PART OF THE Enquiry after HAPPINESS.

The INTRODUCTION.

I AM not ignorant, that dedications and prefaces, if they have in them a genius of eloquence; if they ſparkle with wit and fancy; if they be enrich'd with ſenſe, and animated by moving and vital language; are like graceful acceſſes, and beautiful fronts to buildings; which, while they raiſe in the beholder a ſecret delight, do prepoſſeſs him with favourable opinions of them: but this being only a continuation of a

within ſight of ſhore? How many have loſt their reward of repentance by their relapſe and revolt? How many have fallen by negligence, ſecurity, and ſloth, into that wretched ſtate, out of which they had once deliver'd themſelves by courage, reſolution, and ſelf-denial? Nor is the neceſſity of vigour, patience, and conſtancy, in our purſuit of happineſs, the only motive to it; the certainty of ſucceſs, and the greatneſs and eminence of the advantages which attend it, are ſufficient to animate and encourage any man that ſeriouſly conſiders it. The labour and hope of the huſbandman is loſt, unleſs the fruitful earth and fruitful ſeed be bleſs'd with fruitful ſeaſons too: the trade of the merchant is properly but adventuring, and his increaſe depends as much on the winds and waves, and other as uncertain chances, as on his own ſkill and diligence: fortune muſt aſſiſt the courage and the conduct of the ſoldier, or elſe poverty and diſhonour will be the only purchaſe of his blood and hazard; but it fares not thus with man in his purſuit of happineſs. The traffick of the philoſopher depends not upon winds nor tide; the ſeeds of virtue, if the ground be well cultivated, will thrive in any weather, and ſometimes better in ſtorms than ſunſhine; and, finally, the ſucceſs of our conflicts againſt ſin and miſery depends not on our fortune, but our courage and our induſtry. How unſpeakable a pleaſure is it now to think that we cannot be diſappointed in our travels, nor defeated in our hopes, while we labour for virtue and happineſs; if our endeavours be ſincere

cere and perſevering, our ſucceſs is certain and unqueſtionable: but what an acceſſion doth this pleaſure receive, when we conſider, what will be the glorious fruit of this ſucceſs, tranquillity, chearfulneſs, greatneſs, and enlargement of ſoul; indolence, pleaſure, life, immortality, ſecurity, and, in one word, happineſs. O glorious reward of our conflict, and our victories! What neither wealth, nor greatneſs, nor honour, nor crowns; what neither blood, nor toil, nor cunning, nor fortune, can give! that rational and ſincere endeavours after wiſdom and virtue, will give the meaneſt man upon earth, that is, happineſs! O bleſſed iſſue of philoſophical, that is, truly Chriſtian travail! The rich, the great, the honourable, the mighty, may complain even of their ſucceſs, and repent them of the purchaſe they have made at too dear a rate; but the philoſopher, the Chriſtian, can never repent of the ſucceſs of his ſtudy, his ſelf-denial, his patience, his prayers: for how is it poſſible to complain of being happy, or repent of being wiſe and virtuous? There is nothing empty, nothing evil, nothing mean, nothing uncertain, in true wiſdom, in rational happineſs.

This brief and general account of happineſs, and of the way to it, does naturally inſtruct us how we are to treat the body, and what it is that a rational education and wiſe converſation ought to deſign and aim at. If our conformity to reaſon be either the happineſs of this preſent life, or the immediate cauſe of it (for I will not trouble myſelf with nice and ſubtle diſ-

diſtinctions in moral diſcourſes) then 'tis plain that we are obliged to ſuch a kind of diſcipline and government of ourſelves, as may render the body moſt obſequious to the mind, and may exalt and eſtabliſh the power and dominion of reaſon; for whatever tends to obſcure our underſtanding, to enfeeble the will, to cheriſh our ſenſual inclinations, and augment their force and violence, doth ſo far neceſſarily tend to deprave the nature of man, and to ſubvert and overthrow his happineſs: and from hence it appears, that the excellence of education conſiſts in poſſeſſing the minds of youth with theſe principles, with true notions of good and evil: and informing and moulding their minds into an eſteem and veneration for wiſdom and virtue. The firſt virtue I conceive a child capable of, is obedience, and this is indeed the foundation of all virtue: to this let him be inur'd and train'd up betimes: he that finds it eaſy to obey another's reaſon, will not find it difficult to obey his own; for when the judgment comes to be formed and ripened, when it comes to exerciſe its authority, it will find a body not uſed to give, but receive commands. From this virtue of obedience, he is to be led gently on to a rational and voluntary choice of what is good; he muſt be taught gradually, not only this plain duty, but the motives to it; for it is as neceſſary to his happineſs that he ſhould love, as that he ſhould know his duty. But this we ſtrive in vain to inſtil by art and inſtruction, if we do not inſtil

it

it by the influence and authority of wiſe and excellent examples too.

As to converſation, 'tis plain, that it ought to be the practice of thoſe virtues which a pious education inſtill'd; and that we ought to have no leſs reverence for our reaſon, when we are at our own diſpoſal, and under our own government, than we had for the authority of our parents, when we are under theirs. What ought to be the tie and ligaments of friendſhip, what the rules of converſation, and what the great ends of ſociety, is abundantly manifeſt from the nature of that happineſs which it behoves us to propoſe as the great end of life: what is the great end of man, ought to be the deſign of ſociety; and therefore 'tis plain, that wiſdom and virtue ought to be the foundation and bond of thoſe friendſhips which we enter into, voluntary and of choice; that converſation ſhould be ſo regulated that we may grow by it more wiſe and virtuous; or at leaſt, that our diſcourſe, if it be not profitable, ſhould be innocent; and that we ſhould do and ſay nothing in company, which we ſhould have reaſon to bluſh at, or repent of in private.

I have now finiſhed this diſcourſe, which I deſign'd only as an introduction or preparative for thoſe which are to follow: I do not think that 'tis now neceſſary for me in a pathetick concluſion, to perſuade men to endeavour to be happy. The deſires of happineſs are inſeparable from all beings; at leaſtwiſe, 'tis impoſſible to be rational, and not deſire to be happy. If I have

have therefore ſufficiently prov'd, that 'tis poſſible to be happy; and if I have ſhewed that a diligent enquiry, a vigorous and perſevering induſtry is neceſſary to the attainment of it; if I have pointed out the general cauſes of human miſery, and together with them their general cure and remedy; I have done enough to enkindle thoſe deſires, and beget thoſe reſolutions in my reader, which, if they do not make him actually happy, will at leaſt diſpoſe and prepare him for a further enquiry after happineſs; which was the utmoſt deſign of theſe papers. I have therefore nothing more to put him in mind of now but this, That as I do all along ſuppoſe the grace of God neceſſary to ſecond and enforce our reaſon; ſo I would ever be underſtood to urge and preſs the neceſſity of our prayers, as much as that of our endeavours; the fervency of the one, as much as the ſincerity of the other.

END *of* PART I.

HUMAN LIFE:

BEING A

SECOND PART

OF THE

ENQUIRY

AFTER

HAPPINESS.

By RICHARD LUCAS, D.D.
Late Prebendary of *Weſtminſter.*

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HUMAN LIFE:

SECOND PART

OF THE

ENQUIRY

AFTER

HAPPINESS.

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Of the true notion of human life.

CHAP. I.

Life a great bleſſing in itſelf. Proves a great evil to ſome. And why. Happineſs perfect only in heaven. p. 5.

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Life, what in a natural ſenſe, what in a moral. Life, perfection, and enjoyment, inſeparably united. More particularly, life conſiſts not in ſloth, ſenſuality, worldlineſs, deviliſhneſs; but in the regulation of all our actions according to right reaſon. p. 9.

geſt bleſſing and powerfuleſt motive to obedience, a long life (I examine not now what it farther prefigur'd) under the Old Teſtament, and an eternal one under the New. And for all this there is plain reaſon: for life, if it be not, when rightly underſtood, happineſs itſelf, yet is it ſurely the foundation of it; and the foundation in a building, if it be not as beautiful as upper ſtories, yet is ever as neceſſary. I wonder not therefore, that the ſentence of death ſhook the piety of *Hezekiah*, and the courage of *Saul*; ſo that the one *wept ſore*, and the other *fell to the ground*.

But to all this will it not be objected: Alas! How many are there, who all their days are no more ſenſible of the good of life, than of the pleaſures and repaſts of a dream: who being come to threeſcore years and ten, that is, to die, do not yet underſtand what it is to live? Ah! How many, which is yet worſe, to whom life is a burden, and yet death a terror: who when they are to give back the breath of life, have juſt reaſon to wiſh they had never received it, and to curſe the day that they were born? And do not *Elijah*, *Job*, *Solomon*, *Jeremy*, *Eſdras*, and many others, great and good men, talk of life at a different rate from what I here do; and repreſent it to us under another notion, and quite contrary character? *Better is the day of death, than the day of one's birth. Let the day periſh wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was ſaid, There is a man-child conceived.* The reflection of *Eſdras* on the common miſery of mankind, has as much weight

weight and ſenſe as *Job*'s on his own has paſſion: *For what profit is it for men now in this preſent time to live in heavineſs, and after death to look for puniſhment?* Theſe, and ſuch like paſſages, we meet with every where; which ſeem to give us no very taking idea of life. To this I anſwer; 'tis with life, as with all other bleſſings; the right uſe of it is our happineſs, the abuſe of it our miſery. There is nothing in the nature of the thing that implies evil or trouble; nor has it any neceſſary and inevitable tendency to it. We muſt not therefore eſtimate a bleſſing by the miſchief it occaſions to ſuch as pervert and abuſe it; nor by the complaints, which human frailty ſometimes forces from wiſe and good men in a melancholy fit; or finally, by the reflections they ſometimes make, not on the intrinſick worth, or natural tendency of life, but on the evils which flow from the corruption or depravation of it. 'Tis true, when all is ſaid, heaven is the proper region of happineſs; there it dwells in its glory and majeſty, in all its fulneſs and excellence: but what then? Becauſe perfection does properly belong to heaven, is there no virtue upon earth? Becauſe all things are in their maturity and conſummation there, ſhall we deny that there is any ſweetneſs or beauty here? Juſt ſo muſt we think of the happineſs of this, in compariſon of that of another world; it is here in its infancy; we do ſlumber, and are ſcarcely ever fully awake: we ſee little, penetrate and comprehend leſs; and we move very feebly and unſteadily: but all this while we grow up to ſtrength, we ad-

advance towards perfection, our joints grows firmer, our ſtature increaſes, our underſtanding dawns towards day, and our affections are gradually animated with a more generous and laſting heat: ſo that all this while this infant ſtate of happineſs is pleaſant and promiſing; and every ſtep in the whole progreſs towards perfection, preſents us with freſh beauties and delights: but I know no body ſo fantaſtick, as to deſpiſe the preſent life, becauſe it is not equal to that above: and he that thinks there is none above, ſets the more value on this, becauſe he has nothing more or farther to expect. I will not therefore ſpend any more time in endeavouring to prove life a valuable bleſſing; but rather proceed to ſhew how every man may really make it ſuch to himſelf; which, I think, I cannot more compendiouſly do, than by ſtating the true notion of human life: for as our miſery flows from the abuſe, and our happineſs from the right uſe of life; ſo does the abuſe from falſe, and the right uſe from true notions of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Life, what in a natural ſenſe, what in a moral. Life, Perfection, and Enjoyment, inſeparably united. More particularly, life conſiſts not in ſloth, ſenſuality, worldlineſs, deviliſhneſs; but in the regulation of all our actions according to right reaſon.

LIFE may be conſider'd, either in a natural or moral ſenſe: in the former acceptation, what it is, is an enquiry very abſtruſe and intricate; like the *Egyptian Nile*, tho' its ſtreams be viſible to every eye, its ſource or fountain is concealed; or like grace, though we feel its energy, and taſte its fruits, yet we cannot diſcover and define its eſſence: but to carry our diſcovery thus far, is accuracy enough in moral diſcourſes, whoſe end is not ſpeculation, but happineſs.

Life then, whatever it be in the fountain and eſſence, as far as we can diſcern it, is nothing elſe but that force and vigour which moves and acts the man: and to live, ſpeaking in a natural ſenſe, is to exert the powers and faculties of nature: according to which account of life, 'tis capable of as many notions, as are the different offices it performs: 'tis ſenſe and motion in the body; 'tis perception and fancy in the imagination; 'tis knowledge in the underſtanding; and love and hate, with all their train and retinue of paſſions, in the heart or ſoul.

Now

Now, becauſe all morality conſiſts in the right uſe of thoſe bleſſings which our great and bountiful Author confers upon us; therefore in a moral ſenſe, the true life of man is nothing elſe but the right uſe of our whole nature; an active employing it in its due functions and offices, a vigorous exerciſe of all our powers and faculties, in a manner ſuitable to the dignity and deſign, frame and conſtitution of our beings. To live then, in a moral ſenſe, is to know and contemplate, to love and purſue that which is the true good of man; this is the life of the underſtanding, will, affections, and of the whole man: and whatever acts of ours are not ſome way or other converſant about truth and goodneſs, are not properly acts of human life, but deviations from it.

And here I cannot chuſe but pauſe a little, to admire and magnify the infinite wiſdom and goodneſs of the almighty Architect, who has contriv'd an inſeparable connection and neceſſary dependence between life, perfection, and fruition; every rational act, every right uſe or exertion of our natural powers and faculties, as it is of the eſſence of moral life, ſo does it contribute to the improvement and perfection of our beings, and to the pleaſure and felicity of our ſtate: for perfection is the reſult of ſuch repeated acts, and pleaſure of our entertaining ourſelves with proper and agreeable objects. Happy man! to whom to live, improve and enjoy, is the ſame thing; who cannot defeat God's goodneſs and his own happineſs, but by perverting his nature, and depraving his faculties;

ties; but by making an ill uſe, or none at all, of the favours and bounties of God.

If we examine this notion of life more cloſely and diſtinctly, and reſolve this general account of it into ſeveral particulars, we ſhall eaſily arrive at a fuller and clearer comprehenſion of it.

Firſt, It is evident from this account of life, that it does not conſiſt in *ſloth*, in the mere marriage or cohabitation of ſoul and body; in mere duration or continuance in this world. *Solomon*, indeed, out of a natural abhorrence of death, tells us, *Truly light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is to behold the ſun*, Eccl. xxvii. Something it is; if we muſt call it pleaſure, 'tis but a faint and low one, ſuch as all the irrational creatures, but bats and owls, and moles, are capable of; but according to my philoſophy, it can never deſerve the name of life; he that poſſeſſes vital powers and faculties, is in a capacity of life; but he only that exerts them, lives. To live, is not to ſpend or waſte our time, but to employ it: 'tis a lamentable hiſtory of life, when it can all be ſumed up in the few ſyllables of a funeral ring; he liv'd to, or rather, as it is wont to be expreſſed, he died ſuch a day of the month, ſuch a year of his age; for indeed he lived not at all. Life is a mere dream; not only on the account of its ſhortneſs, but alſo of its night and lethargy, when ſtupid ignorance confines and dims the proſpect, and ſluggiſhneſs enfeebles all the powers of the mind: vigour, and activity, fruition and enjoyment, make up life; without theſe,

theſe, life is but an imperfect embryo, a mingled twilight, that never will be day: the images which the ſlothful form of things, are faint and obſcure, like pictures drawn in watery colours, and weak and imperfect ſtrokes; and vaniſh as eaſy as thoſe half ſounds and imperfect forms which we take in between ſleep and waking; all their paſſions move drowſily and heavily, and all their entertainments have no more reliſh than abortive fruit, which can never be ripened into ſweetneſs or beauty. When I have obſerved any one thus waſting away a whole life, without ever being once well awake in it, paſſing through the world, like a heedleſs traveller, without making any reflections or obſervations, without any deſign or purpoſe beſeeming a man; ah! thought I, is this that creature for which this great theatre the world was made; for which it was ſo adorned and ſo enriched? Is this the creature that is the epitome of the world, the top and glory of the viſible creation, a little inferior to angels, and allied to God? Is this machine acted by a moving flame, and by a wiſe and immortal ſpirit? Ah! how much is this poor uſeleſs ſtupid thing ſunk beneath the dignity and deſign of its nature! How far ſhort is it fallen of the glory to which God has deſtin'd it! Shall this contemptible thing ever be admitted to eternal life, who has ſo wretchedly fooled away this temporal one? or, Can crowns and kingdoms be reſerved for one, who has been ſo ill a ſteward of all theſe talents God has committed to him? No ſurely; I could upon the firſt thought

thought imagine, his doggish soul would vanish like those of brutes: or, as the *Stoics* fancy, those of fools: I could easily imagine, that it could sleep, not as some fancy all souls do, to the resurrection, but to all eternity. But upon better consideration, I find this ignorant and incogitant life, is not so innocent as to deserve no worse a fate: for is it a small crime to live barren and unfruitful, endowed with so many talents? to frustrate the design of our creation? to choke and stifle all the seeds of a divine life and perfection? to quench the grace and Spirit of God? In a word, is it a small crime to be false and perfidious to God, unjust and injurious to man? No, it cannot be; and therefore in a parable of our Saviour, wherein the last audit or day of accompts is represented, the slothful and wicked servant signify one and the same thing, and must undergo one and the same sentence.

Secondly, *Life* cannot consist in sensual y; that is, in the mere caressing our senses, or he gratification of our carnal appetites. The asons of this assertion are evident from the general notion of life. For first, this is not the exercise of the whole nature, but a part of it, and that the inferior and ignobler too. Secondly, it is not an employment suitable to the dignity of our nature.

First, Sensuality employs only the meaner part of us. St, *Paul* makes mention of the outward and the inward man, and seems to make up the whole man of spirit, soul and body: and some, both divines and philosophers,

of

former treatiſe; and having little encouragement, either from my humour or talents, to any attempt of that kind, I ſhall never ſuffer myſelf to be unneceſſarily engaged in it. I will therefore in this place only give a ſhort account of what I have performed in the firſt volume, and deſign in this. In the *firſt ſection* I ſhew'd, that happineſs was neither ſo great and divine a poſſeſſion, as to be above the ambition of man; nor ſo inconſiderable, as not to deſerve it: and next, that it was not to be expected from time or chance, fancy, or inclination; but from reaſon and induſtry, virtue and religion. In the *ſecond*, having firſt briefly ſtated the notion of happineſs, I endeavoured to demonſtrate the poſſibility of obtaining it, and to reſcue ſo important a truth from the prejudice and objections that might ſtifle and oppreſs it. In the *third*, I juſt pointed out the cauſes of human miſery, or of unſucceſsfulneſs in this enquiry, and the remedies of it.

Having thus remov'd whatever might diſcourage or fruſtrate our endeavours after

after happineſs, I am now to proceed to a more ſtrict and particular examination of the nature of it, and the ways and methods that lead to it. In which I am obliged, according to the general deſign or ſcheme laid down in the former volume, to treat of *Life*, *Perfection*, *Indolence*, and *Fruition*: accordingly I here begin with *Life*; and, dividing this book into *three ſections*, I will, in the *firſt*, diſcourſe of the true Notion of Human Life; in the *ſecond*, of the right conduct or regulation of two different kinds of life, active and contemplative; in the *third*, of the right huſbanding of human life, by prolonging and improving it.

SECT. I.

Of the true Notion of LIFE.

CHAP. I.

Life a great Bleſſing in itſelf. Proves a great Evil to ſome, and why. Happineſs perfect only in Heaven.

THOUGH life renders us capable of pain as well as pleaſure, yet has it ever been valued as the richeſt bleſſing; the love of it is the earlieſt and the ſtrongeſt principle in us; it moves the infant before he knows how to rate the pleaſures of life, or can apprehend any evil in death: it grows up to ſtrength and maturity in man, and is the ſovereign paſſion in him, to which all the reſt pay homage: *ſkin for ſkin, and all that a man has will he give for his life:* age does very little diminiſh it, and miſery itſelf cannot extinguiſh it. Nor does this paſſion want the ſuffrage of the wiſeſt and the greateſt men, or the approbation of God: for one chief deſign of ſociety and government, of laws and arms, is the protection of life: and God, who beſt underſtood the bent of human nature, has propos'd, as the big-

of no ſmall note, both modern and ancient, have taught that there are two diſtinct ſouls in man, a ſenſitive and a rational one. If this be ſo, the ſenſualiſt, though he ſeem fond of life, does fooliſhly contemn the better half of it; and as much a ſlave to pleaſure as he is, he chuſes to drink only the dregs, and lets the pure ſtreams of ſprightly and delicious life paſs by untaſted: for, if there be a ſenſitive and a rational ſoul, there muſt be a ſenſitive and a rational life too, diſtinct and different from one another, and one as much elevated above the other, as are the principles they flow from. But whether this be ſo or no, does not import much: for it is plain, that life, whatever it be, is like ſeed, which, according to the different ſoil it is ſown in, produces fruit more or leſs rich and ſucculent, more or leſs luſcious and beautiful: here it ſprouts forth like the ſeven, poor and lean; there like the ſeven, plump and rich, ears of corn in *Pharaoh*'s dream: and ſhould it by way of fiction be ſuppoſed, that one and the ſame ſoul did communicate life to men, beaſts, and vegetables; however life in each would be equal to the dignity of its original, it would vaſtly differ in its effects and operations: ſo, whether life in man flow from one or two diſtinct principles, it is evident that its price and dignity varies according to the different powers and faculties which it moves and animates; and by conſequence, that life, which diſplays itſelf in the acts of our rational part, will be as different from that which conſiſts in ſenſation, and the motions of bodily

bodily appetites, as is the light that glitters in a diamond, from that which faintly imitates it in a pebble; the more numerous and the more exquiſite our faculties, the vaſter is the empire of life, and the more delicate and charming all its functions and operations. How evident is this in all the organs and ſenſes of the body? let darkneſs invade the eye, and deafneſs the ear, and then within what narrow and ſcanty bounds is the bodily life reduced? How few and ignoble are the vital acts and operations of the body? how vile and contemptible are all the fruits or inſtances of a ſenſitive life? If then there be no ſenſe or organ of the body ſuperfluous, can we think the rational ſoul itſelf can be ſo? if there be no power, no capacity of a ſenſitive ſoul, by which life is not enlarged or enriched, muſt we not needs conclude, that to extinguiſh the immortal ſpirit within us, and, as it were, to diſcard all its powers and faculties, muſt needs be, to impoveriſh, mutilate, and ſtifle it? ſince I have a ſoul as well as a body; ſince the one is capable of converſing with God and heaven, with truth and moral goodneſs and perfection, as the other is of converſing with this world of viſible objects; I cannot but conclude, that to be deſtitute of knowledge and faith, of hope and love, is more injurious to the life of man, than to be deaf or blind; that ſtupidity or lethargy in the ſoul, ſuch as renders it altogether incapable of rational pleaſure, is as inconſiſtent with the true life of man, as lethargy or a dead palſy in the body can be; and to be excluded from commerce with the inviſible

world,

world, is as fatal to it, as to be debarred the viſible one. From all this 'tis evident, that whether we conſider life with reſpect to its excellence and dignity, or to its enlargement and extenſion, ſenſuality is extremely injurious to it in both reſpects: ſo far doth it debaſe and contract it, that I may boldly conclude, to place life in ſenſuality, is to renounce the much more valuable and delightful part of it, to baniſh ourſelves the much better world, and to rob ourſelves of a thouſand joys and pleaſures which we might reap from the rational powers and faculties, that is, the nobleſt capacities and endowments of our nature. Tho' this be abundantly enough to evince, that life conſiſts not in ſenſuality; yet this being of the higheſt importance to human happineſs, I will proceed to the ſecond argument againſt it; that is,

Secondly, It is not conſonant to the dignity of human nature, or, which is all one, to the deſign of our beings, conſpicuous in our frame and conſtitution. Who, that ever conſider'd what ſenſuality was, how narrow the extent of ſenſe, how mean and brutiſh the pleaſure that terminates in it, what a corruption and degeneracy it ends in; who, I ſay, that has ever conſidered theſe, and a thouſand things more, can believe that ſenſuality is an employment worthy of a man? Is this the buſineſs of a vaſt and comprehenſive mind? Is this conſiſtent with ambitious deſires of immortality, with unquenchable thirſt of truth, with a capacity of diſcovering ſpiritual excellencies, and

and moral beauties and perfections? Was it for this we were endow'd with propenſions to worſhip and adore a Deity? What can be as much as fancied, the uſe of wiſdom, magnanimity, conſcience, ſagacity, caution, fear, foreſight, and anxious enquiries into future things and times, if ſenſuality had been the only employment deſign'd man? How much more fit had we been form'd for this end, if there had been in us no reaſon to check and controul us, no conſcience that could fill us with regret for the paſt, or fear for the future; no wiſdom that could teach us, that there were any thing above us, nor greatneſs of mind that could reproach us for ſtooping to any thing below us?

Thirdly, 'Tis almoſt ſuperfluous here to add, that life conſiſts not in *worldlineſs* or *deviliſhneſs*: As to the former of theſe, by which I mean the cares and purſuits of the world, 'tis plain, that to employ our time and faculties in this alone, is not to live, but at beſt to provide for life. Neceſſity may ſometimes ſubject us to the drudgery and ſlavery of the world; but a voluntary choice never ſhould. I know no other difference between a mean fortune and a great one, than this; that the great one ſets a man above thoſe cares and toils, which the mean one forces him to ſubmit to; that the one puts the fortunate man into the immediate poſſeſſion of all the means and inſtruments of life, improvement and fruition, and of leiſure and opportunity to make uſe of them; but the latter obliges the leſs fortunate man to purchaſe theſe advantages with toil and ſweat,

ſolicitude and care: 'tis therefore an unpardonable wilfulneſs or blindneſs, whenever that vaſſalage, which is the infelicity of the mean man, is the choice of the rich and fortunate one. Nor is it a more pardonable error in any, who continue the drudgery and care when the neceſſity is over; and voluntarily ſuffer all the diſadvantages of a narrow fortune, even when they have attain'd to a plentiful one; who never think it time to begin to live, or to enjoy the ſucceſs of their cares and diligence: this is an abſurdity as groſs as his, who, after he has plow'd and ſow'd, ſhould refuſe to reap; or his, who having, with much coſt and labour, furniſh'd out a plentiful table, ſhould not at length find in his heart to fall to and eat.

Life then conſiſts not in the abundance of the things which a man poſſeſſes; much leſs in the vexation or toil of acquiring, ſecuring, or increaſing them, which is that I intended by *worldlineſs:* but leaſt of all can life conſiſt in *deviliſhneſs:* that is, wrath, ſtrife, revenge, pride, and ſuch like. This cannot be call'd the vigour and activity, but ſtorm and agony of our nature: this is a ſtate, wherein the underſtanding is cover'd with a darkneſs of hell, that is, ignorance of good and evil; and the paſſions are but furies unchain'd, and let looſe.

Fourthly, Having thus, by reſolving particularly concerning life, that it conſiſts not either in *ſloth* or *ſenſuality*, *worldlineſs* or *deviliſhneſs*, pointed out thoſe fatal errors which miſlead and ſeduce men from the paths of peace and happineſs; 'tis now time to ſhew in the laſt

laſt place, what it is, wherein life does more immediately and particularly conſiſt; that is, *in a vigorous and active employment of the whole man, according to the rules and dictates of right reaſon.* When I make reaſon the director and guide of human life, when I conſtitute it dictator over all the powers and paſſions of man, I do no more mean to exclude the aid of revelation, and the Spirit of God, than when I affirm the eye to be the guide of the body, I intend to deny the neceſſity of light to good eyes, or of ſpectacles and collyriums to dim or diſturbed ones. The propoſition thus guarded, will appear indiſputable to any who ſhall conſider the frame and make of man. That we are rational creatures, is a truth never hitherto controverted; and that reaſon is the ſovereign faculty in us, appears from the univerſal appeal of all ſides and all ſects, to its tribunal. Not the virtuous and wiſe only, but the looſe and the vicious plead the authority of reaſon in defence of their choice and actions; and in all the numberleſs diſputes that are in the world, though only one ſide can have the warrant and countenance of reaſon, yet all do pretend to it: ſo that though there be no power or authority which in reality is more frequently oppoſed and violated, there is alſo none which is more unanimouſly owned, and univerſally acknowledged; as therefore it is plain, from what has been diſcourſed before, that life conſiſts not in vital powers and faculties, but in the exerciſe and employment of them; ſo is it as plain, that in this we are not to follow the conduct of fancy and

imagination, of luſt and paſſion, but of reaſon. This is the right uſe of our natural gifts, which diſtinguiſhes man from beaſts, and men from one another; the hero from the caitiff and villain, the philoſopher from the fool, and the ſaint from the ſinner: in this conſiſts the order and dignity of human nature; in this the beauty and tranquillity of human life; and in this the inward joy and peace of the mind of man. This will be yet more manifeſt to whoſoever will take the pains to enquire what the office of reaſon is: 'tis this which teacheth us what rank we hold among the creatures of God, what ſtation we fill in the world, what our relations and dependencies are, what the duty and what the hopes, what the benefit and what the pleaſure that reſult from each: 'tis this which preſcribes all our powers and paſſions, their order, place and work; 'tis this which diſtinguiſhes truth and falſhood, good and evil; 'tis this which fills us with the knowledge, and enflames us with the love of our ſovereign happineſs, and judges of the means and ways that lead to it; and finally, 'tis this which teaches us to ſet a true rate and value upon all inferior things, in proportion to their tendency, either to promote or obſtruct our ſovereign good. Happy therefore is that life where reaſon is the ſovereign arbitrator of all our actions, and where the imaginations and paſſions, all the powers of the ſoul, are yet ſervants and inſtruments of reaſon. Happy this life; for it can neither want pleaſure to entertain it, nor buſineſs to employ it: happy the ſoul which thus lives:

for

for it ſhall never want comfort to ſupport it, hopes to encourage it, nor crowns to reward it: For as it grows in wiſdom and goodneſs, ſo muſt it in favour with God and man; and its peace and tranquillity, its joys and expectations, muſt receive a proportionable increaſe too.

CHAP. III.

Inferences drawn from the former chapter. First, *to cultivate our reaſon. The uſe of which is more particularly inſiſted on with reſpect to three things, that is, the employing our faculties, the bearing evils, and enjoying good.* Secondly, *To renounce every thing that oppoſes it, as fancy, paſſion, example, cuſtom.* Thirdly, *That 'tis poſſible to be happy in every ſtate.* Fourthly, *That a long life is a great bleſſing, conſider'd either in itſelf, or with reſpect to the life to come.*

FRom the notion of life thus ſtated, 'tis evident, *firſt*, That our buſineſs is to cultivate and improve reaſon: for this, as you have ſeen, is to be the guide and ſuperintendant of all our powers and faculties, and the arbiter and judge of all our actions: *If the light that is in you be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?* Matth. vi. 22. Vigour and activity, if reaſon do not ſteer them, will but prove miſchievous and fatal to us; diligence and induſtry themſelves will ſerve only to corrupt our nature,

and embroil our life; every deviation from reaſon, is a deviation from our true perfection and happineſs; the fool and the ſinner do, in the language of the ſcripture, ſignify the ſame thing, and ſo do ſin and miſery. This is the true original of all thoſe miſchiefs which infeſt the world, the neglect or contempt of right reaſon: 'tis this which makes our complaints ſo numerous and ſo bitter; 'tis this that makes us ſo weak and ſoft in adverſity, ſo reſtleſs and little ſatisfied, even in proſperity itſelf; 'tis this creates all thoſe diſaſters and diſappointments, which make us often quarrel at providence, and curſe our fortune: *the folly of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt God*, Prov. xix. 3. Well therefore did the wiſe man adviſe, *Prov.* iv. 7. *Wiſdom is the principal thing, therefore get wiſdom; and with all thy getting, get underſtanding*. The neceſſity of this does eaſily appear from the ſlighteſt reflection upon the work or office of reaſon, of which I have given a brief and general account before, much more for the uſe of it, in three great points; the employing our faculties, the enjoyment of good, and the bearing of evil.

Firſt, The employing, *&c.* The ſoul of man, like a fertile field, ſeems alike apt to produce either herbs or weeds; the faculties of it are capable of being the inſtruments of the greateſt evil or the greateſt good; the greateſt good, if regulated and conducted by reaſon; the greateſt evil, if blindly and raſhly led by any other principle. What is the imagination

of

of a fool, but a ſhop of toys and trinkets, not the laboratory of a philoſopher, where a thouſand vain trifles and empty ideas flutter confuſedly up and down? What is his memory, but a receptacle and ſink of ſins and follies, of mean and ſhameful things and actions; not a treaſury of excellent truths, laid up like ammunition and proviſion for time both of peace and war? What his heart, but the rendezvous of a thouſand mutinous, violent and diſhonourable luſts, which rend and tear him, worſe than the devil in the goſpel the man poſſeſs'd? Nay, what is even fancy and wit itſelf, if deſtitute of ſound judgment and true reaſon, but I know not what ſort of flaſhes, which dazzle, but do not guide, ſerve for amuſement, rather than nouriſhment and delight? and therefore the author is very well paid, if he be praiſed and ſtarved, which is generally his fate. In a word, neither buſineſs nor diverſion can have in them any thing truly uſeful or truly pleaſing, if they be not regulated and conducted by right reaſon; and all the diſpoſitions and faculties of our nature will be, but either loſt upon fooleries, or abuſed to our ruin.

Secondly, The uſe of reaſon is conſpicuous in the fruition of good. Knowledge is like light ſhed upon the face of the world, which diſcovers all its various beauties and wondrous wealth; which, while darkneſs cover'd them, were as tho' they had not been. Without reaſon we ſhall not be able to diſcern nor value our own happineſs, nor be ſenſible of our bleſſings and goods, even tho' they croud and throng upon

us; without this, our very enjoyments will prove fatal to our repoſe, and we ſhall meet gall and wormwood in the bottom of our draughts of pleaſure: *for the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them*, Prov. i. 32. It requires no ſmall philoſophy, either to render buſineſs pleaſant, or pleaſure innocent; either to diſcharge thoſe duties which a great birth or eminent ſtation call men to, or to employ that time which an ample fortune makes them entirely maſters of; and to huſband a life of eaſe and enjoyment to the beſt, and fill it with virtue and honour. Ah! how often have I ſeen the vigour of nature diſſolv'd by pleaſure, the edge and fineneſs of its parts blunted by ſloth and ſoftneſs? How often have I ſeen men render'd mean and contemptible by ſucceſs and proſperity, for which they were not big enough? whereas had the mind been well cultivated and enrich'd with true wiſdom, pleaſure and diverſion themſelves had refin'd and recruited nature; and power, honour and plenty had only placed worth and greatneſs in a better light: This is true in its proportion from the loweſt to the higheſt ſtation: It requires ſenſe and reaſon to govern and enjoy proſperity; an obſcure and narrow fortune is moſt convenient both to conceal and preſerve a fool; for plenty and power, dignity and preferment, do but expoſe him to ſcorn and danger; and it were well if the poor creature could periſh, or ſuffer alone: but the miſchief is, like a falſe and ſandy foundation, he overthrows the deſigns and intereſts

tereſts that are built upon him, and miſerably betrays the confidence repos'd in him. But how great ſoever the uſe of reaſon be, as to the goods, it is no leſs in relation to the evils of this world: for,

Thirdly, Reaſon is the pilot of human life, and ſtears it ſteadily through wild and tempeſtuous ſeas, amidſt the rocks and ſhelves of luſt and fancy, fortune and folly, ignorance, error, and a thouſand cheats and impoſtures. 'Tis this alone that enables man to deſpiſe imaginary evils, and vanquiſh real ones; it arms the mind with true and laſting magnanimity, furniſhes it with ſolid comforts, and teaches it to extract life and health, virtue and wiſdom out of the madneſs and mutability of men and fortune, like antidotes and cordials out of things poiſonous and baneful in themſelves. It is not now to be wonder'd at, after this account, how imperfect ſoever it be, of the uſe of reaſon (which ſufficiently ſhews how eſſential it is to the being, the ornament and felicity of human life) if I have reſolv'd it to be the great buſineſs of man to improve and cultivate it; ſurely all the great men of the world, and all the inſpired ones, have been of my opinion: for their chief, if not only deſign, ever was, either to obtain wiſdom themſelves, or to propagate it amongſt others: and 'tis evident, that God himſelf has ever carried on this one deſign of advancing wiſdom amongſt the ſons of men. This is the pre-eminence of his law above thoſe of men, that theſe reſtrain the actions, but thoſe enlighten the mind; theſe puniſh offences and crimes,

but

but thoſe, by informing the judgment, and ſtrengthening the reaſon of man, prevent the commiſſion of them, and direct and inſtigate him to the practice of virtue. This then is the great work that God and man invite us to, that we ſhould make daily progreſs and proficiency in knowledge and underſtanding; *that we would incline our ears to wiſdom, and apply our hearts to underſtanding; that we ſhould ſeek her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for hid treaſures:* and this is that which our nature and ſtate invite us to: for our perfection and our pleaſure, our ſucceſs and our ſecurity, our repoſe and tranquillity, and in one word, our true happineſs depends upon it.

Secondly, It eaſily follows from the right notion of life, that we are to bid open defiance to all thoſe things which directly oppoſe or ſecretly undermine the authority of reaſon, or any way obſtruct the free exerciſe of its power and ſovereignty; for 'tis to no purpoſe to travail and labour to advance reaſon, if afterwards we refuſe to be governed and conducted by it: Reaſon, if we do not live by it, will ſerve only to increaſe our ſhame and guilt. St. *Peter* thinks *it better never to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after the knowledge of it to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto us*, 2 Pet. ii. 21. To ſtifle the ſparks of reaſon by negligence and ſloth, to choke the ſeeds of wiſdom and perfection by a lazy and vicious education, is a great crime; but to deſert and betray our reaſon, grown up to ſome maturity, to hold it in captivity and fetters,

fetters, to defile and proſtitute it, by compelling it to ſerve and flatter abominable paſſions; this ſure muſt be a far greater degree of wickedneſs and prophaneneſs, and conſequently muſt needs expoſe the man to the ſcorn or pity of the wiſe and rational part of mankind, to the reproaches and confuſion of his own conſcience, and to the wrath and indignation of God: Or, if none of theſe miſchiefs ſhould attend the contempt and prophanation of knowledge, yet there is one more of itſelf ſufficient to make man miſerable; it precipitates him into all the irregularities and wildneſſes imaginable, nothing being ſo inſolent and ungovernable, ſo ſavage and untameable, as thoſe paſſions which are accuſtomed to over-power and maſter reaſon. 'Tis from all this manifeſt, that whoever loves life, and would experience it a real bleſſing, muſt with all his power ſet himſelf to remove and defeat whatever may hinder his ready and entire ſubmiſſion to the dictates of reaſon. Now the things which enfeeble the ſtrength of our reaſon, and baffle its authority, are ſuch as theſe, *fancy*, *paſſion*, *example*, *cuſtom:* Theſe we muſt ever combat, till we have reduc'd them within their bounds: fancy ſurpriſes, paſſion over-powers, cuſtom and example betray our reaſon: we muſt therefore always oppoſe the giddineſs of fancy, and the violence of paſſion, and guard our minds againſt the inſinuation of cuſtom and example: and to do this well, to do it ſucceſsfully, is of greater importance, than any work of our ſecular calling, than any attendance upon trade, or a temporal

poral intereſt; this can only make us great, but that will make us wiſe; this can make us rich, but that will make us happy: this therefore muſt be the next great buſineſs of life, to aſſert the majeſty and ſovereignty of reaſon, and never ſuffer it to be held captive and enthralled by any vicious principle or impotent luſt. Happy the man who ſucceeds in this! his ſincerity ſhall be to him as good as infallibility; his conſcience ſhall never reproach him, nor God condemn him; and tho' he may not always hit the next way, he ſhall never wholly miſs the right way to *happineſs:* therefore from this notion of life,

Thirdly, We may infer the poſſibility of *human happineſs* in every ſtate: for ſince to live, is but to act regularly, to uſe and employ our powers and faculties rationally; and ſince life, perfection, and fruition, are one and the ſame thing, or elſe inſeparably and intimately united, it is evident that no circumſtances can deſtroy our happineſs, unleſs they deſtroy our reaſon; no condition can render us miſerable, but that which can render it impoſſible for us to act rationally; that which obſtructs our attainment of knowledge, or our liberty of acting conformable to it. But what circumſtances can theſe be? what condition can we fancy, wherein it ſhall be impoſſible for a chriſtian to know his ſovereign good, and purſue it? to learn his duty, and to practiſe it? wherein it ſhall be impoſſible for him to ſearch and contemplate truth, to love and follow after righteouſneſs and goodneſs, and to be meek and humble, modeſt and magna-

magnanimous, juſt and charitable, pure and devout? Wherein, in one word, it ſhall be impoſſible for him to live by faith, or, which is the ſame thing in my ſenſe, by reaſon? *Solomon* long ſince obſerved, *that wiſdom uttereth her voice in the ſtreets, and in the meetings of the high-ways.* This is more eminently true now, ſince the reaſon of mankind has been refined and defecated by revelation; and true philoſophy has been diffuſed and publiſhed through the world; the fountains of truth and wiſdom lie open to all who thirſt after them, and God no more denies any his grace than his revelation. All which being ſo, 'tis evident, that as God has put it in the power of every man to act rationally, ſo has he put it in every man's power to be happy; that *human happineſs* is not precarious, or dependent on fortune, but ourſelves: for life conſiſts not in the abundance of things which a man poſſeſſes, but in the right uſe of them; and *better is a poor and a wiſe child, than an old and fooliſh king*, Eccl. iv. 13. For the good eſtate of the mind conſiſts not in foreign, but domeſtick poſſeſſions: not in the riches of fortune, but of grace and virtue; and fruition cannot conſiſt, either in the abuſe of temporal things, or the depravation of our nature, but in the true cultivation and improvement of the one, and the right uſe of the other.

Fourthly, From hence laſtly, it eaſily appears, on what account length of days is a great bleſſing, whether conſider'd in *itſelf*, or with *reſpect* to a future life. Firſt, in itſelf: If life did

did conſiſt in earthineſs, that is, the ſcraping and raking together ſums of money, 'tis plain that life muſt ebb and flow with our fortune; and whenever the revolutions of times or trades ſhould put a ſtop to the career of our ſucceſs, and give a check to all our farther hopes and projects, we ſhould have nothing elſe to do, but to break off the thread of life: For what uſe could we make of the remains of our miſerable days! or, if life did conſiſt in ſenſuality, we ſhould have little reaſon to deſire to ſurvive our youth and ſtrength; and length of days would be rather a burden than a bleſſing: for we ſhould ſoon outlive our pleaſures, and ſhrink and wither into dull, impotent and contemptible things. But if my notion of life be true, the pleaſures and joys of it muſt increaſe and multiply with our years, ſince reaſon ought day by day to advance to more perfect maturity, and more abſolute authority: *with the ancient is wiſdom, and in length of days underſtanding*, Job xii. 12. *And the paths of the righteous are like the ſhining light that ſhineth more and more to the perfect day.* A thorough experience of the emptineſs and uncertainty of this world, with a longer and more intimate acquaintance with another, ſhould poſſeſs the ſoul of this man with a magnanimity that nothing ſhould ſhake, with a tranquillity that nothing could diſturb: the cuſtom of doing good, together with the peace and delight that ſpring from the reflections on it, ſhould make the current of his actions run ſmooth and calm; his obſervations on the changes and turns

of

of human affairs, the riſe and declenſion of parties and cauſes, the ſecret ſprings and wheels of the paſſions of the mind of man, together with all the various arts of managing them, do fill him with a ſort of a divine fore-knowledge, and entertain him with a wondrous proſpect: and how happy muſt this man be in himſelf! and how much honour'd and rever'd by others! conſulted as an oracle, propoſed as an original of goodneſs, the abſolute maſter of this world, and the immediate heir of another! which is the ſecond thing.

Secondly, This is the only notion of life, which can render it a bleſſing in reference to its influence upon another: none but rational pleaſures which are the antepaſt of heaven, can enkindle our thirſt, or qualify us for the enjoyment of thoſe above; nothing but the wiſe and rational employment of our faculties can prepare us for a heaven, or entitle us to it. Nay, further, if life had not this influence upon another world, length of days would be an injury, not advantage to us: it would only keep us from our heaven, delay and put off our happineſs. But now, when, according to this notion of life, every act of life does perfect our nature, enlarge our capacity, and increaſe our appetite of glory: when every day that is added to life, by the production of ſome new fruit, does add new ſtars to our crowns of righteouſneſs, and new treaſures to our heavenly inheritance; it is evident, that a long life is a great bleſſing, not only on its own account, but alſo of that life which we expect hereafter. Bleſſed God! how

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conſpicuous is thy goodneſs in this whole contrivance! how cloſely and inſeparably haſt thou united virtue and happineſs! and how natural is the aſcent from a rational life here, to a glorious life hereafter.

SECT. II.

Of the different kinds of Life.

THEY who handle morals nicely and abſtractedly, ſeem to me to forget the nature of their ſubject; which requires to be handled after its own way, that is, practically, and, if I might ſo ſay, groſsly and corporeally: for the mixture and variety, the complication and confuſion, the mutability and inconſtancy of human affairs and actions, which are the matter of morals, are not ſubject to rules of art and ſpeculative exactneſs: and therefore, though I will follow the received diviſion of life into active and contemplative, as ſquaring exactly with my notion of it; yet I would not be underſtood to deſign under theſe heads to treat of all the various kinds or ſtates of life. I touch not the military, the ſacerdotal, the ſcholaſtick life; nor do I here uſe the words *active and contemplative* ſtrictly and nicely: but by the firſt I underſtand any ſort of publick life, and any ſort of private one by the laſt: nor do I much concern myſelf whether the life of a trader or artiſan be logically reducible under the one or the other; or whether it ought to conſtitute a diſtinct

diſtinct and particular kind of life by itſelf: But accommodating myſelf to the nature of things, and purſuing my own deſign, without any ſcrupulous regards to words or forms, I will diſcourſe *firſt*, of a civil; *ſecondly*, of a trading and negociating; and *thirdly*, of a private and retir'd life: having *firſt*, in a preliminary chapter, ſaid ſomething in general, of the difference of an active and contemplative life, and the reaſons or grounds which ought to prevail, and determine man in his ſelection of the one or the other.

CHAP. I.

The conveniencies and the inconveniencies of the active and contemplative life. The active more neceſſary. The ſeveral grounds on which men determine their choice, that is, intereſt, providence, inclination, &c.

THE felicity, or infelicity of man, depending not a little upon the choice he makes of his courſe of life, it is worth the conſidering, which of theſe two kinds, the active or contemplative, is to be preferred. If they be compared in themſelves, the active ſeems to have more in it of glory, and alſo more of hazard; it ſeems more ſerviceable to others, but not ſo eaſy to a man's ſelf: he therefore that would render each ſtate perfect, and remove the inconveniencies of each, muſt ſtudy how to relieve the toil, and obviate the hazard of the

active, and to prevent the barrenneſs and inglorioufneſs of the contemplative life.

But which ſoever of theſe two be the more excellent in itſelf, 'tis certain the active life is the more neceſſary and indiſpenſible to the well-being of human ſociety. Such is the nature of mankind, that being liable to various neceſſities, it requires the various relief of manifold aſſiſtances, to which every man is bound to contribute his ſhare: we have minds that muſt be cultivated, bodies that muſt be provided for. The ſtate either of war or peace hath its ſeveral wants, all which call for ſeveral arts to wage the one and enrich and adorn the other: without theſe we ſhould find no defence in war, nor pleaſure in peace; without theſe, human life would grow wild and ſavage, and human nature would be uncultivated and unſociable; without theſe, our houſes had ſtill been caves and grotts, our food acorns and water, our clothing the ſpoils of beaſts. Finally, without theſe, the ſpeculative man would ſoon ſuffer thoſe neceſſities, which would convince him that he lived in a world, and in a body, which required more at his hands than bare muſing and thinking; and would ſoon force him to give over his ſpeculations, for the more neceſſary enquiries of food and raiment: or, if he could be content with that proviſion, which nature, untainted by art and induſtry, would yield him and the beaſts of the field, yet would he not be able to promiſe himſelf the continuance of this mighty bleſſing: without laws and arms, the undiſciplin'd rabble would diſturb his muſings,

ſings, avarice and violence would invade his walk, and drive him from his little cottage and brook, where he had choſe his retreat. For theſe, and a great many other reaſons, the world hath enroll'd the authors and inventors of laws and arts amongſt their gods, and has gratefully recorded the memories of all ſuch as have any way contributed to the conveniencies or ornaments of human life, as the benefactors of mankind: and holy writ itſelf has not been wanting to do honour to all ſuch: for it has regiſtred the names of ſuch as have excelled in any thing beneficial to the Publick.

But however this be, whatever be the excellence and advantage of an active above a contemplative life, either conſider'd in itſelf, or with reſpect to its ſerviceableneſs and uſefulneſs to the world, 'tis certain that men, generally ſpeaking, are not determined to the one or to the other, by theſe conſiderations, but by ſuch particular circumſtances, as often render that which is leſs excellent in itſelf, more fit and proper for them: Thus ſometimes education trains men up (ſhall I ſay) or condemns them to a particular kind of life, and the choice of others prevents the liberty of our own: ſometimes the ſolicitation of friends carries us againſt the very bent and inclination of nature, and ſometimes a lucky and unexpected providence frees us from the trouble of perplexed deliberation, and leads us on in methods which human prudence could not have contriv'd; but moſt commonly of all, we take counſel from the nature of our ſtate, and the neceſſities of our for-

tune: how much is to be deferr'd to each of theſe, is a matter not eaſy to be decided: againſt neceſſity we cannot diſpute; againſt the invitations of providence we ought not, if we have but good proofs of the one or the other. But 'tis too too often, that weakneſs of judgment or courage makes us call that neceſſity which is not; and the flattery of our hopes makes us interpret our dreams or fancies divine auguries or preſages. As to friends and intereſts, I confeſs, with the ingenious Sir *Henry Wtoon*, that an expert man does more eaſily get up into the ſaddle by the help of a ſtirrup, than a much ſtronger by mere force: Yet it ought to be conſidered, that a man who is unequal to the deſigns of his friends, renders their patronage very difficult, but his own life more. As to the bent or inclination of nature, ſo mutable are the tempers, or at leaſt, the fancies of mankind, that this is a diſcovery not ſoon to be preſum'd upon; or elſe I ſhould as ſoon adviſe to give up one's ſelf to this, as to any other Guide. The truth is, the trueſt meaſures in this enquiry, are to be taken from a thorough knowledge of ourſelves, and of the different courſes of life about which we deliberate. But alas! they are but few, whom a propitious providence has left at liberty to enter into this deliberation, and fewer that are capable of forming a true reſolution upon it. I am ſure, there is no enquiry of human life, wherein there is more need of an infallible guide; and therefore I would counſel the young to conſult God in the firſt place, and next, the moſt ſage and experienced

enced they can find out: for they ſtand in a place where many ways meet; and if they take the wrong, they will certainly wander far, and, it may be, never recover the right. And as to others, who have ſtruggled long againſt wind and tide, who have floated long upon the billows of vulgar errors of their own private luſts and fancies, they will be happy, I think, if after long experience of their folly, they make with all ſpeed for land, and take the firſt harbour where they can ride in ſafety.

CHAP. II.

Of the civil life, or the active life of a gentleman.

Sect. 1. *The gentleman's obligations to an active life, from the conſideration of what he owes to God, to his country, to himſelf. The active life not injurious to the gentleman's pre-eminence, liberty, pleaſure.* Sect. 2. *The regulation of the civil life,* i. e. *The knowledge and virtues neceſſary to this ſort of life. The conſtancy required throughout the whole courſe of the gentleman's life. Some vacations from buſineſs neceſſary, and to what ends.*

BEfore I go about to ſet down thoſe rules which may render men of rank and fortune belov'd, eminent and happy in their ſtation, I think it neceſſary to convince ſuch of the

obligations they lie under to be some way or other useful and serviceable to the world; for 'tis in vain to talk of the knowledge and virtue necessary to support and adorn a civil life, to such as persuade themselves that they are born only to follow their own humour and fancy; and that it is the prerogative of their birth and fortune, to be idle, ignorant and loose.

Sect. 1. This then is the first thing I would fain make gentlemen sensible of, that they cannot, without unpardonable guilt and reproach, waste and fool away their life and fortune; and I think, this would not be very hard to effect, if they would please to make but a very slight reflection upon the arguments I here address to them. You owe more to God and to your country, not to add to yourselves, tho' that be true too in a proper sense, than any others do. To God—to his providence you owe it, that you were born to those fortunes which others toil for; that you are the masters of that time, which others are forced to devote to their wants and necessities; and that you are placed at first in those advantageous heights, which others climb to by slow and tedious steps: your guilt therefore is greater than the mean man is capable of, while you invade the honour of that God, from whom alone you derive yours; while *you* dethrone *Him* who has raised *you*, and employ all your power and treasure against that Being from whom you received them; no ingratitude, no treachery or baseness like that of a favourite and confident. And as you owe to God, so do you to your country, more than other men;

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you are they who ſhould be the ſupport and ornament of it; you are plac'd in higher orbs, not that like meteors, your ominous blaze ſhould be the gaze and terror of the multitude; but that, like ſtars, you might lighten and beautify, animate and impregnate the inferior world: for you, like them, ſhould have an enlarg'd proſpect, a ſwift and conſtant motion, a bountiful and benign influence. If your virtues do not more diſtinguiſh you from the crow than your fortunes, you are expoſed, not honoured, by the eminence of your ſtation; and you debauch and betray your poor country by your ſin and folly, which your example, your wiſdom, your courage, and your bounty, with all thoſe other great virtues which perſons of your rank ſhould ſhine with, ſhould protect and enrich, and raiſe to the higheſt reputation of virtue and power. Miſerable muſt that kingdom be, whoſe rich and great ones are as much more impudently wicked, as they are more fortunate than other men; when they, whoſe example ſhould awe the vicious, contribute not a little to corrupt the virtuous part of it, and to debauch the very genius and ſpirit of the nation: when they, who ſhould be the patriots of their country, inſtead of being men of travel and reading, of abilities and experience, of honour and activity, are verſed only in eſſences and perukes, game-houſes and ſtews; and have ſo far loſt the qualities of a gentleman, that they are meaner, falſer, and cowardlier than the loweſt of the people: thoſe muſt indeed be ſtrange *courts*, *councils*, *parliaments*, *armies*,

which are filled and influenced by such as these; that must be a wretched state, where men make their court by debauchery, and know no other politicks, than what an inveterate aversion to the national government and constitution, or a more inveterate one to religion and virtue, suggest.

But if your country move you not, consider yet what you owe yourselves: Idleness is both a reproach and burden; for what can be more dishonourable, than to be good for nothing; or irksome to an active nature, such as man's is, than to have nothing to employ it? What can be more shameful, than for a wealthy, or well-born man, to be the pity or sport of his country, or the inward scorn even of his domesticks and neighbours? and what can be a greater plague, than for one, who is master of his whole time and of an ample fortune, not to know how to employ the one or the other, but in such courses as tend to the disgrace of his family, the ruin of his country, and the damnation of his soul? *You* ought to remember, that great fortunes do generally mark men out for great troubles as well as great enjoyments! and were there no other motive to a vigorous and active life, but this one, that it did fortify the courage, and harden the temper, this should be sufficient to any man, who will but consider to how many changes and revolutions, how many disasters and mischiefs a great fortune renders men obnoxious: so that when men had not yet entertained the opinion of the unlawfulness of self-murther, poison (as appears from *Livy*'s reflection on *Masanissa*'s present to his

his miſtreſs) was a part of the domeſtick proviſion of the families of the great; and a poiſon-bearer ſeems to have been almoſt as natural an office as a cup-bearer.

The ſum of all is, gifts of fortune, like thoſe of grace or nature, as they capacitate and qualify, ſo do they deſign and oblige men to ſuitable duties; and Chriſtianity expects increaſe proportionable to mens talents. Not idleneſs and luxury, not ignorance and debauchery; but knowledge and virtue, and a more eminent degree of ſervice to God and man, ought to be the diſtinctive character of the rich and great (for how ſhould that be the privilege of an illuſtrious birth and ample fortune, which is a reproach and diſhonour to human nature?) theſe are the abilities that conſtitute gentlemen truly great, that make them the props of a ſinking ſtate, or the ſtars and glories of a flouriſhing one; this is that, which the ſafety and glory of your country, and your own happineſs and poſterity, demands at your hands; and happy were it, if the laws and cuſtoms of our country, as once thoſe of the beſt conſtituted kingdoms and commonwealths, did exact virtue and induſtry with the greateſt rigour, and puniſh idleneſs and riot with infamy, baniſhment and death.

Nor has any one reaſon to complain, that to oblige the gentleman to an active and induſtrious life, is to debaſe his quality, or to invade his liberty, much leſs to rob him of all the pleaſures and advantages he is born to. On the quite contrary, an active virtue is the honour

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of a gentleman; this is the only ſolid foundation the love and eſteem of his country can be built on; all other advantages of fortune do but adorn him as a pageant, to be the ſport and gaze of the crowd; and all that have ſenſe enough to diſtinguiſh between merit and fortune, will inwardly deſpiſe the fool and ſluggard, whatever courtſhip and compliment they may make to the eſquire and landlord. And as buſineſs can be no diminution of his honour, ſo neither can it be of his liberty: for not to inſiſt upon that great truth, that the ſervice of virtue is the only freedom or liberty of man; not to mind you, that the buſineſs of men of wealth and birth is always a matter of choice, not neceſſity, they being ever in a condition to retire when they ſhall judge their privacy and leiſure more valuable than their employments: This one ſingle conſideration cannot but ſilence this ſuggeſtion, that no man is leſs maſter of himſelf and time, than the man that has an ample fortune and no buſineſs; for he is always expoſed to the forms and impertinencies, to the humours and ſottiſhneſs of a number of people as idle and ignorant as himſelf: and, I think, there can be no ſervitude ſo wretched, as that to luxury and vanity; nor any confinement or attendance ſo tedious, as a compliance with the folly, with the trifling and looſeneſs of the world: but buſineſs is at all times a comely excuſe, and never fails of putting a man handſomely in poſſeſſion of his liberty, and the diſpoſal of his own time and actions.

But

PAGES PARTIALLY ILLEGIBILE

But of all the aſperſions with with addreſſes of this kind are wont to be aſſaulted, there is none more palpably injurious than this, that to condemn a gentleman to buſineſs, is to rob him of his pleaſures: for the truth is, 'tis buſineſs and employment that gives guſt and reliſh to pleaſure; 'tis this that prevents the diſeaſe of pleaſure, ſurfeit and ſatiety; and makes diverſion always new, and nature always vigorous: 'Tis true indeed, a rational and manly employment, ſo raiſes and fortifies the mind, that it is above being a ſlave to ſenſual pleaſure; and ſo entertains it, that it needs not make vicious and ſinful pleaſure a refuge againſt the dulneſs and nauſeouſneſs of life: But after all, tho' all this be true, there is one conſideration more important ſtill, which is, that the buſineſs of a gentleman, if diſcharged as it ought to be, is always attended with pleaſure, and that a more briſk and ſenſible one, than he can find in any thing elſe: For whether he protect the oppreſſed, or oppoſe the violent and the unjuſt, by his power: whether he ſteer the ignorant and the ſimple to their harbour, by his wiſdom; or relieve the neceſſity of the poor, by his wealth: whether he ſupport a ſinking friend, or raiſe a deſerving creature: whether he aſſert the authority of laws, and maintain the rights of his country: in a word, whether he aſſiſt the publick or the private by his fortunes, his abilities or virtues; all theſe works have ſomething in them ſo great, ſo generous, that I cannot but think the opportunities and capacities of theſe the higheſt privileges and prerogatives of

of a fortunate birth. It was the ſabbath, the reſt of God, when he beheld all his works, that they were exceding good: nor can I believe God took more pleaſure in the creation, than he does in the preſervation and government of the world. How pleaſing then muſt be the reflections upon theſe God-like works? for tho' this be not to create a new world, it is certainly to embelliſh, govern, and ſupport the old. There is little reaſon to imagine why the works of virtue ſhould procure their authors leſs pleaſure than thoſe of fancy, wit and learning do theirs. Why the poet ſhould feel a bigger joy riſe from a witty poem, the painter from a well-finiſhed piece, the architect from a well-contriv'd building, the ſcholar from a juſt and regular diſcourſe, than a gentleman ſhould from the happy and honourable effects of wiſdom, courage, bounty, and magnanimity: theſe ſure are the greater excellencies, and as the original is more noble, ſo is the iſſue too: for certainly to preſerve the lives and fortunes of men, is much more than to make them ſeem to live in imagery; to raiſe a family, is much more than to contrive and build a houſe; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and actually diſperſe the clouds and ſorrows of the afflicted, by a preſent and vigorous remedy, is much more than to treat the fancy of the ſoft and vain; and, in one word, actually to compoſe the diviſions, allay the heats, govern the impetuoſities, and reſtrain the exorbitant paſſions of men by the force of laws, by the influence of example, and that authority and aſcendant which the fortunes and abilities of

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the great ones give them over their inferiors, is, in my judgment, a much more signal ſervice to God and man, than it can ever be to debate a controverſy with the moſt diſtinguiſhing judgment, or write an exhortation with warmth and briſkneſs.

Having thus demonſtrated that perſons of rank and fortune lie under many and ſtrong obligations to activity in their ſphere, and confuted thoſe objections which are commonly oppoſed againſt it; I will proceed to lay before them, with all due reſpect, ſuch rules as may guard them againſt that envy and danger, that toil and diſcontent, which uſually accompany the motion of the great, as dirt, or duſt, or heat, that of their chariots; and which, on the other ſide, may render their activity a great inſtrument of their felicity: for I would not that ſuch as are the common patrons and benefactors of mankind, ſhould meet with no other recompence but trouble and hazard: as if, like clouds, they could not refreſh and impregnate the earth, unleſs they were themſelves diſſolved and waſted into ſhowers: I would have every worthy action be an acceſſion to their greatneſs, and every honourable performance carry with it a reward, which ſhould not depend upon the humour of the prince, or levity of the people.

Sect. 2. *Rules to be obſerved by the gentleman in a publick ſtation, or in order to the happineſs of a* civil life.

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1. He muſt be endow'd with *knowledge*.
2. With *virtues* proper and neceſſary to his rank and ſtation.
3. He ought to be conſtant, reſolved, and vigorous throughout the whole conduct and courſe of his life and affairs.
4. His time ought not to be ſo wholly taken up in buſineſs, as not to leave vacancies for *religion*, *meditation*, *friendſhip* and *diverſion*.

Firſt, Of the gentleman's *knowledge*. There is no fortune that *knowledge* better becomes, or that ſtands more in need of it, than a gentleman's; without it, an eſtate is rather cumberſome than uſeful; and the ignorant owner muſt be the tool or inſtrument of another's ambition or intereſt, the prey of a menial ſervant, or the property of an imperious wife or wanton child, or, which is worſe, of ſome crafty retainer, who grows impudent with the favour, rich with the ſpoils both of the honour and fortune of his maſter: The beſt that can befal ſuch a one, is, if he have the good luck to light into good hands, and join himſelf with a right party, he may be the appendage of ſome other's fortune, the ſhade and umbra of another, who intercepts the ſmiles and thanks due to him; he may, in a word, talk and act by the ſenſe and reaſon of his party. This is a poor and contemptible condition to a man of birth and fortune, to be incapable of employing the advantages he is born to, and to be only the prey or tool of the cunning, avarice, ambition, and impotent

impotent paſſions of others; or, at beſt, the inſtrument of a wiſer man; for the wiſe is born to rule the fool.

Nor is this all; the gentleman's ignorance is ſo much the more worthy of reproach, becauſe he appears to be born to greater opportunities of knowledge, as he that ſtands upon a more eminent height does naturally enjoy a more free and open proſpect.

But what is worſe than all this, a patrician fortune, joined with a plebeian underſtanding, renders a man not more liable to ſuffer miſchief, than apt to commit it: for if the man have much paſſion, and no underſtanding, as wealth is apt to inſpire men with pride and wilfulneſs, tho' it cannot with wiſdom; what can be expected from ſuch a perſon, who hath power enough to execute his paſſions, and no reaſon to reſtrain them! who looks upon it as contumely to be oppoſed; and tho' he hath no ſenſe himſelf, is too big to hear it from another! What can ſuch a man be, but a plague to himſelf and others! and what can his wealth and intereſt be, but reſiſtleſs inſtruments of evil! It is then indiſpenſibly neceſſary, as well for the avoiding evil, as doing good, that the great man be endow'd with a *good underſtanding*.

The firſt thing he ought to be well acquainted with, is *religion*, as the only ſource of ſolid wiſdom, and the main ground of a juſt and laſting reputation: nor indeed can I ſee how a man can be conſiderable without it; for tho' baſe ends require baſe inſtruments in all other caſes, I ſee not how either prince or people

can truſt thoſe men who are falſe to God and themſelves. 'Tis ſcarce to be expected, that he who ſacrifices his religion and his reaſon, that is, himſelf, to any luſt or paſſion, ſhould be nice and ſcrupulous of giving up a remoter intereſt or obligation to it. But when I ſay the gentleman ſhould be acquainted with religion, I do not mean, that he ſhould perplex and amuſe himſelf with the diſputes that have debauch'd, or ſubtilties or niceties which have diſpirited or enervated Chriſtianity: I would have him have ſo much illumination, as to be able to diſtinguiſh between natural religion and the politicks, revealed religion and the fancies and whimſies of man: I would have him thoroughly inſtructed in the reaſons and grounds of our common Chriſtianity; and ſtudy and ruminate them, till he feel the power of them, and find himſelf form'd and impreſs'd by them. He underſtands religion well, who learns from it what it is to be juſt, and derives from it courage enough to dare to be ſo. I ſhould think it a neceſſary part of his knowledge, or at leaſt, a good accompliſhment in a gentleman, to be ſo far acquainted with eccleſiaſtical ſtory, as not to be ignorant what influence religion, or the pretences of it, has upon the world, and what uſe cunning men have ever made of it; by what degrees or what arts the maxims of the world have been incorporated into religion, and the church hath wound and inſinuated itſelf into the ſtate. Thus you will diſcern what the true meaſures of religion are: you will have a juſt regard for wiſe conſtitutions without bigottry:

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you will free yourſelves from all thoſe doubts and ſcruples which uſher in atheiſm and prophaneneſs; and, in a word, you will find religion the true ſtandard of wiſdom and diſcretion, the effectual inſtrument of private and publick good, and the infallible guide to honour and happineſs.

Next to the *knowledge* of religion, follows the *knowledge* of the world, which may be divided into the knowledge of matters and men: which is ſo neceſſary in every part, in every act of life, but eſpecially of a publick one, that I cannot but wonder at the vanity of ſuch as can fancy it poſſible to maintain a ſolid reputation in their country, and fill any ſtation honourably or happily without it. The confidence of an empirick, or other ſuch wretched projectors and undertakers, ſeems to me modeſty and virtue, compared to the ſhamefulneſs and wickedneſs of ſuch men as obtrude themſelves upon affairs of a publick nature, unſtudy'd, unvers'd in things or men, that is, totally unqualify'd; which, whoever conſiders the difficulty of managing them well, or the miſchievous conſequences of miſcarrying in them, muſt confeſs. Let the gentleman therefore ſtudy the laws and conſtitutions of the realm, its changes and revolutions in their cauſes, progreſs, and effects, its natural and political ſtrengths and weakneſſes, defects and excellencies, together with its foreign intereſts, relation and dependencies; nor let him be wholly ignorant of the frame and policy of other kingdoms, tho' he ought to be beſt vers'd in his own; he muſt travel abroad, but

dwell at home: for I would have him have a veneration, not ſuperſtition for the laws and cuſtoms of his own country: for I doubt, the wiſdom of our own nation is not great enough to juſtify the neglect, much leſs contempt of that of foreign ones: and becauſe what they call the law of nature, is only the law of right reaſon, in thoſe great precepts of it which ſeem immutable and inviolable, and the ſame in all times and places; he ought not to be a ſtranger to this, leſt being ignorant of the grounds of human ſociety, and of the nature and obligation of particular laws, every new emergency, change or deviation from the common road, diſcover his inſufficiency: for 'tis a miſerable thing to ſee, how, through the ſimplicity and weakneſs of ſome, and the ſubtilty and cunning of others, laws which ſhould be the fences and bulwarks of the people, are often made only their chains and fetters; and thoſe publick and ſolemn ties which were deſign'd to ſtrengthen and fortify the conſtitution, become the moſt fatal engines of undermining and ſubverting it. I have obſerv'd many, who would be excellent perſons in a regular and calm ſtate of affairs, that are miſerably perplex'd, and at a loſs, or wretchedly abuſed or impoſed upon in a diſordered and unſettled one; like a perſon of my acquaintance, who rides well in enclos'd and narrow roads; but her brains begin to ſwim, and her heart to fail her, on downs and plains.

After all, that I may not ſeem to be treating rather of ſpeculation than action, and to have propoſed ſuch an extenſion of knowledge, as if I were

were recommending rather a life of ſtudy than of buſineſs, I muſt put you in mind, that the deſign of this ſort of learning ought to be to make men wiſe, not ſubtil; judicious, not diſputative: that curioſity or diligence in matters minute or ſubtil, has more in it of amuſement than uſe; and that to lay the foundation too deep and broad, does ſeldom quit the coſt: and, in a word, it ſeems to me to be in policy, as in religion; he is the moſt prudent who beſt underſtands the particular laws or precepts of his particular ſtation; as he is the moſt religious who is beſt learned, not in the univerſal ſcheme of theology, but the regulation of his own affections, and the conduct of his own life.

But in vain does he ſtudy things, who knows not men: for man is the inſtrument of power and policy; and whoever knows how to manage and gain an aſcendant over him, is the moſt conſiderable in his country, and able to do the greateſt miſchief or the greateſt good: But when I talk of knowing men, I mean not only ſuch a *knowledge* of particular perſons, as may inſtruct you what to hope, or what to fear from them; what employments or truſts they are fit, or unfit for; and in a word, who are proper or improper inſtruments in different affairs, times and circumſtances; who are fit to be the partners of your pleaſures and diverſions, who of your confidences and ſecrets, and ſuch like; but alſo the knowledge of human nature: to be thoroughly read in all the ſprings and reſorts of human actions, in all the various paſſions and diſeaſes of the mind of man, with all

their cauſes and cures; and to be able to diſtinguiſh the genuine and natural, from the acquired and artificial perſon; and becauſe not ſingle perſons only, but times and ages, nations, cities, and leſſer bodies and ſocieties, have their particular temper and genius, theſe muſt not be neglected neither. This is the knowledge, which, together with a dextrous uſe and application of it, is the very life and ſoul of worldly prudence, and makes up the beginning, middle, and end of true policy. But after all, both with reſpect to the publick, and a man's own good, that ought to be a rule for the man of buſineſs, which St. *Paul* preſcribes for a biſhop, *Let him firſt learn to rule his own houſe well.* He that will be truly wiſe, ſhould know himſelf firſt, ere he goes about to know the world; and begin the practice of his politicks in his own family, and in the ſettlement and due adminiſtration of his domeſtick affairs; in which, if he cannot ſucceed, I muſt confeſs, I cannot ſee what encouragement either prince or people can have to confide in ſuch a one: for the diſorders or diſſipations of a private fortune, are very omnious preſages of a mal-adminiſtration of publick truſt. Nor can I ſee what can induce ſuch a man to undertake it, but the mere hopes of repairing his private dilapidations with the ſtones and timber of the publick.

But after all, how neceſſary ſoever I account knowledge in a gentleman engaged in an active ſtation; yet I cannot but obſerve, that whether we regard the publick or the private, wickedneſs has ever been more fatal and diſhonourable

nourable to both, than ignorance; and all truſts have ſuffered more in the hands of the falſe and the baſe, than of the unfit and inſufficient: therefore,

Secondly, The gentleman ought to be enriched with virtues, eſpecially thoſe which become his rank and ſtation. Knowledge is but the ſeed of virtue, and like that, it only rots and putrifies, if it grows not up into excellent habits, and bring not forth the fruits of virtuous actions. There is ſcarce any ſtation which does not require a particular virtue, either to diſcharge or adorn it; one patience, another courage, a third vigilance, and ſo on; there being ſcarce any office or buſineſs which is not liable to ſome particular inconveniencies and temptations: But it being impoſſible for me to proſecute all theſe, I will only inſiſt on two or three which are eſſential to all true greatneſs and honour; and, if I am not much miſtaken, to a happy and proſperous diſpatch of all affairs; I am ſure to the ſecurity and felicity of the publick and private: Theſe are, *integrity*, *magnanimity*, *humanity*.

Firſt, *Integrity*. By Integrity I mean two things, juſtice and truth: The firſt, to regulate our actions; the ſecond our words. Nor do I take juſtice in a beggarly barreting ſenſe, as if the gentleman had acquitted himſelf of a due well enough, if there were any plauſible pretence to excuſe the violation or omiſſion of it; as if he were to regard more what the law could compel, than what honour did oblige him to. I mean, the teſtimony of his own conſcience,

both concerning his diligent and impartial enquiries after the right, and ſincerity in purſuing it: for I would not have him appear to do right, rather out of the fear of infamy, than love of virtue. The word of a gentleman ought to be fix'd and unmoveable as fate, ſacred and inviolable as the altar. Contracts and evidences, and ſeals, and oaths, were deviſed to tie fools and knaves, and cowards; honour and conſcience are the more firm and ſacred ties of gentlemen. Nor muſt this honour extend only to private dealings, but much more to publick; in which, good God! how comely, how noble is it to ſee integrity triumphing over intereſt and paſſion! to ſee a great man preferring truth and juſtice to the favour and menaces of princes; and readily quitting all intereſt, and all parties, to ſupport the publick ſafety and honour, or fall with it. But as heroick as I would have the gentleman, I would not have him vain; I would not have him led or impos'd upon by empty noiſe and names; I would have him love a good name, but much more a good conſcience: for I would have him as judicious as reſolved; as bright and luminous, as brave and inflexible: for I admire not an integrity that bids defiance to prudence and right reaſon: I love a ſteady faith and unmoveable juſtice, but not romance and fancy; I would have a great man not inſenſible of a difference between loyalty and ſlavery, between tyranny and anarchy; and in the ſame manner he muſt be able to diſtinguiſh between a ſerpentine ſubtilty, and a ſtupid inſufficiency, and want of neceſſary addreſs and dexte-

dexterity: without ſuch a competency of knowledge, all will be but folly, not integrity; vanity, not conſtancy. As there is an integrity in action, ſo is there in ſpeech too; it ſeems to me, not to conſiſt in bare truth only, but alſo in an ingenuous openneſs and freedom: cloudineſs and ambiguity, ſeem to me rather fit to diſguiſe ignorance or deſign, than to pourtray or expreſs the ſentiments of a wiſe or an upright mind; yet in words, as well as deeds, there is an extreme; though frankneſs and openneſs in converſation, like a free and generous air, become a gentleman, I would not have freedom violate diſcretion, nor ſimplicity and openneſs leſſen greatneſs; too many and wide apertures, if they add beauty, do certainly diminiſh the ſtrength of a building.

Secondly, The next virtue beſeeming a gentleman, is *Magnanimity:* by which I do not mean an empty tumour, but ſolid greatneſs of mind, which ought to diſcover itſelf in every inſtance of his life: I ſay, in every inſtance; for I count it not enough to bear diſappointments with moderation, unleſs he bear his ſucceſs ſo too: I count it not enough to encounter dangers with courage, unleſs he encounter his pleaſures with as great; and, in a word, there ought to be ſomething even in his diverſions and entertainments, as well as in his buſineſs and employment, that may ſpeak the ſtrength, and wealth, and ſelf-ſufficiency of his mind. You'll eaſily conclude this with me, if you allow theſe two or three things to be eſſential to true greatneſs of mind; an invincible courage and reſolu-

tion; a rational and generous activity; and an enlarged and publick ſpirit; which you cannot but allow, unleſs you think that the coward and ſlave, the ſluggard or ſot, the ſordid and ſelfiſh, may be reckoned among the magnanimous. But what principle, what foundation, is able to ſupport ſo mighty a weight? Natural courage may make a man brave danger, or if that will not, ambition may; while it preſents him with a more formidable evil, if he turn his back upon the other; but what ſhall make the man modeſt and humble in his triumphs, who was gallant and daring in fight? Paſſion and revenge may make men firm and fierce in their conteſts and oppoſitions; but what can make a man forgive, when he is in a condition to revenge an injury? The luſt of power, and honour, and wealth, that is, ſelf-love, may render a man active and induſtrious; but what is it that can prevail with him to ſacrifice his own intereſt and his family's to publick good? Honour has been generally thought the moſt likely principle to do all this. I muſt confeſs a breaſt inflamed with the love of honour, ſeems to me incapable of any mean or baſe impreſſion; but then the notion of honour ought to be juſtly ſtated: for if by this, we underſtand the ſmiles and courtſhips of the great, or the praiſes or acclamations of the people, it had need be in ſettled times, a wiſe court, and a modeſt people. I doubt there is not judgment enough in the people, nor plainneſs and ſimplicity enough in courts, to give men and actions a true value: and therefore, if a man would propoſe

honour

honour as the reward of his actions, it ought to be that which consists in the approbation of such who are able and disinterested judges: a mistake in this point is often of very ill consequence, and perverts the whole course of human life, betraying either into factious opposition, or sordid and unworthy compliance. Nor is this the only inconvenience that the love of honour is obnoxious to, that men may be misled and abused by false and mistaken notions of it; but it also often happens, that envy and emulation in particular men, or the violence of a prevailing faction, or the iniquity of times, may stifle and oppress the merit, or traduce and blast the integrity of the most excellent actions; in which cases, I doubt, the secret opinion of two or three virtuous men, or an expectation of greater justice from future times, will be too weak a cordial to support an injur'd virtue, if its only nourishment and sustenance be honour. I think therefore religion is the only basis on which magnanimity can stand; by which I mean, a love of rational and virtuous actions upon wise and solid grounds, a secret delight and complacency in the performance of them, accompanied with the peace and serenity of mind that springs from reflection upon them, and the joy which a firm persuasion that God will be our rewarder, breeds in us: This, as it will secure us against the errors, so will it against the inconstancy and injustice of the world; this will minister sufficient motives to generous actions, when we meet nothing but discouragements from all things else;

this,

this, if it will not make a publick employment honourable, will always make it ſafe; this, if it cannot render great places profitable, will ever render retirement pleaſant, and in all the changes of times and humours, will preſerve a man ſteady and calm in himſelf.

But whilſt I recommend magnanimity, I muſt not forget that there are follies and vices which often are wont to uſurp its name. I never thought that the love of our country did imply a neglect, much leſs a contempt of our private fortune; that a vain confidence or preſumption in provoking and irritating dangers ought to paſs for courage: for this were to make fortitude and prudence incompatible. Nor do I think, that a violent intruſion into buſineſs, or an indiſcreet intangling a man's ſelf in much, or engaging in any that is foreign or impertinent, deſerves the name of induſtry or activity; or pride, ſtiffneſs and ſavageneſs, the name of firmneſs and conſtancy; for, in a word, I would have magnanimity rather lovely than haughty, rather rever'd than dreaded. Therefore,

Thirdly, *Humanity* is the next virtue to be aimed at. Nothing can be more fitly joined with magnanimity than compaſſion, with courage than tenderneſs; nor with the felicity of a great fortune, than charity or bounty. I cannot think that there is a truer character of greatneſs, than to be a ſanctuary to the injur'd, a patron to virtue and merit, a counſellor to thoſe that err, and a ſupport to the afflicted, the needy and defenceleſs. In theſe things conſiſt the life and ſubſtance of humanity; the ornamental

mental part of it is *affability or courteouſneſs*; the art of behaviour lies in a narrow compaſs, the whole ſkill of it conſiſting in obliging; which he ſhall never miſs, who has once poſſeſs'd his ſoul with tenderneſs and goodneſs: for then every word, every action, together with the whole air of deportment, will be animated with a reſiſtleſs ſweetneſs, and will be nothing elſe but the portraiture and expreſſion of thoſe excellent diſpoſitions: by this means too, the deportment will be natural, not artificial; and tho' it be generally kind, it will be more particularly ſo, where it meets with a more moving occaſion: to which, if it be added, that the carriage of a gentleman ought to be humble, but not popular; courteous, but not cheap or proſtitute, you will decline all the conſiderable errors, to which affability is obnoxious.

It was the cuſtom of the ancients to deliver their inſtructions in ſhort and plain ſentences, without a labour'd exhortation, or paſſionate enforcement. And certainly there is ſuch a commanding authority in the dictates of truth and wiſdom, ſuch a divinity, majeſty and loveline's in ſolid virtues, that did the ſimplicity and probity obtain in theſe, which is ſuppoſed to have done in thoſe times, advice of this ſort would eaſily make its way to the hearts of men, without the aſſiſtance of any motives. But I dare not be either ſo confident of my own performance, or of the times, as not to think it neceſſary to cloſe the advice of theſe paragraphs with ſome arguments and motives to theſe virtues.

Shall

Shall I make uſe here of the topicks of religion? Shall I invite you to integrity and magnanimity, from the conſideration of the omniſcience and providence of God? Shall I put you in mind how little ſordidneſs, falſhood and fear; how little pride and inſolence, can become the principles and perſuaſions of a Chriſtian, concerning the emptineſs and vanity of this world, or the true happineſs and laſting glory of another? Shall I preſs you to humanity, to meekneſs and humility, by calling to your remembrance the life of Jeſus, your frailty and mortality, and, what is worſe, your ſins and follies? Shall I ſhew you how mutable and inconſtant your fortune is; and, if it were not, how accidental, fantaſtick and inconſiderable a diſtinction this makes between you and perſons of a lower rank; and, that they ſtand at leaſt upon the ſame level with you, in reſpect of the ſubſtantial and ſolid intereſts of human nature; that is, the favour of God, virtue, grace and glory? Alas! I am afraid, you have generally but little reliſh or guſt for this ſort of arguments.

But have you as little value for your country, as religion? are you as little moved by the ruin of this, as the corruption of that? Behold your country once formidable abroad, and well compact within. Ah! now what reproach and contumelies does it not ſuffer abroad? what convulſions at home? Its wealth has neither ſervice nor defence in it. Its numbers are without courage, and its forces have nothing of ſtrength or terror in them. Why all this?

It

It bleeds in your factions and diviſions; it reels and ſtaggers under your ſoftneſs and luxury; 'tis betray'd by your falſhood and cowardice: Ah! that its reformation might begin where its degeneracy has, and that it might recover by your virtues, the honour it has loſt and forfeited by your vices! Pardon me, I do not here ſuppoſe that there are none exempt from this accuſation; that in the body of the nobility and gentry there are not, even in this degenerate age, ſome bright inſtances of a true *Engliſh* courage and integrity; I only wiſh that there were more: that there were enough to atone for the reſt, and to prop up this declining *ſtate*. Nor is it a petulant humour, but a zeal for your honour particularly, as well as that of the nation, that now acts me: for, give me leave to put you in mind at length,

That your honour, your intereſt, and your happineſs depend upon your integrity, magnanimity, and humanity; nor is it poſſible that the one ſhould ſurvive the other. *Firſt*, your *Honour*. The whole world is poſſeſs'd in favour of theſe virtues: and however it hath fared with ſome other, theſe have ever been in vogue, not amongſt the beſt only, but the worſt of mankind. I have indeed underſtood, that there are ſome who have openly profeſs'd, and defended *Intemperance* and *Incontinence*; but I think, none ever yet have in earneſt undertook the patronage of *cowardice*, *prefidiouſneſs*, *inhumanity*, or *inſolence*. I have never yet met with any who have not thought it ſcandalous and reproachful to find leſs *faith*,

leſs

leſs *honour*, leſs *goodneſs*, or, if you pleaſe, more ſhifting *cowardice*, *falſhood*, and *ſordidneſs*, in his lordſhip, or his worſhip, than in a groom or lacquey. Nor did I ever find, that lands and eſcutcheons, wealthy relations and honourable anceſtors, were ever look'd upon as apologies or mitigations, but rather aggravations of ſuch baſeneſs and degeneracy: nor could any man ever think it a commendation to be the ſinks and ſewers of a noble family, the ruins of an ancient and once ſtately pile, or the lees and dregs of a rich liquor long ſince drawn off, and evaporated. Nor does your *Honour* only, but *ſecondly*, your *Intereſt*, depend on theſe virtues. If you want theſe, I ſee not what you can poſſeſs, that can either gain you the favour of the prince, or eſteem of the people. This ſure is the reaſon why theſe virtues have ever been in ſuch credit in the world: becauſe their influence is ſo neceſſary, ſo univerſally ſerviceable, whether to the publick, or to friends and dependents. Now that integrity which can give others ground confidently to rely upon you; that generoſity and magnanimity which raiſes their hopes and expectations, does naturally give you an authority and aſcendant over them, and you become the maſters of their lives and fortunes, whilſt they promiſe themſelves the protection or improvement of them from your virtues. To theſe then you muſt owe the patronage and confidence of thoſe above you; the dependence, love, and eſteem of thoſe below you; without which, what can you effect, what can you

enjoy

enjoy truly great or conſiderable? You are impotent and contemptible as plowmen and ſailors, when ſolitary and abandoned: your retinue and dependence, your friends and admirers make you powerful. In ſhort, a man of birth and fortune that is perfidious, cowardly, ſelfiſh and proud, has not, in my judgment, or deſerves not to have, half the intereſt an honeſt yeoman, or plain-dealing tradeſman has in city or country: for what confidence can be placed in ſuch a one? Will he be tender of the honour of his country, or his friend, who has no ſenſe of his own? or, will he ever be either a good patron or friend, who is ready to ſacrifice all to his private avarice? Nor is it a matter of ſmall importance, that reputation founded in virtue ſurmounts all ſorts of difficulties, and crowns all undertakings with ſucceſs. And ſince men are naturally backward, when they are jealous and diſtruſtful, but prompt and forward, where they are ſecure and confident; it has ever been obſerved, that integrity (if not deſtitute of competent prudence) has in diſpatch of affairs, ever outſtripped craft and ſubtilty. But the weightieſt conſideration of all, is, that theſe virtues, if they be not the ſureſt foundation of greatneſs, are, doubtleſs, of happineſs: for they will make a man find a tranquillity in his mind, when he cannot in his fortune: the conſcience of a man's own uprightneſs will alleviate the toil of buſineſs, and ſweeten the harſhneſs of ill ſucceſs and diſappointments, and give him an humble confidence before God, when the ingratitude

of

of man, or the iniquity of times rob him of all other reward.

Having thus given an account of theſe two things, wherein conſiſt the ſufficiency of a man of buſineſs, that is, *knowledge* and *virtue*; I will proceed to the conſideration of the third rule.

Thirdly, The gentleman ought to be conſtant, reſolved, and vigorous in his motion. *Conſtancy* and *Vigour*, whether in the acquiſition of knowledge, or improvement of virtue, or management of affairs, are of the greateſt moment and importance. I ever prefer a ſtrong before a fine edge; induſtry and reſolution, before wit and parts: He that makes a daily progreſs, how ſlow ſoever it be, will in time reach his ſtage: vaſt bodies and mighty armies, by conſtant marches, have travelled through thoſe unknown regions, which a ſingle perſon would almoſt deſpair of compaſſing in his lifetime. To what a height does the tree raiſe its head, tho' its root be fixed in the heart of the earth? becauſe, though it grow ſlowly, and even imperceptibly, yet it grows conſtantly, and receives ſome acceſſion every moment. This rule, as I inſinuated before, is applicable to knowledge, virtue, and buſineſs. To *knowledge*. To what would not an ingenious perſon, furniſhed with all aids of ſcience, advance his proſpect, if he uſed but moderate induſtry, and proceeded regularly! What could there be in any ſcience, which were either of any uſe, or any certainty, that could eſcape him? and other things ought not to ſtop him. They may be his diverſion, but ought

ought not to be his ſtudy. I believe, there are few natures but are capable, if not of eminent accompliſhment, yet of ſuch improvement as may render them conſiderable and uſeful enough, if they would apply themſelves to the ſtudy of knowledge with any tolerable vigour, or exert their vigour with any regularity and uniformity. 'Tis owing to lazineſs and wantonneſs, that the ſlow and heavy attain not ſo much abilities as might ſuffice to ſet them off, and to make them ſhew tolerably well: and 'tis to the ſame that the quick and witty owe their want of all ſolidity and judgment, while they diſcover only enough to make the world juſtly condemn them, as wanting to themſelves and their country, being bad ſtewards of a naturally rich and improveable eſtate, careleſs and ill maſters of good parts.

Nor is conſtancy leſs ſerviceable in the purſuit of virtue than of knowledge. Virtue, when acquir'd, is confeſſed by all to be eaſy and delightful, becauſe natural and rational; but to acquire it, this is the difficulty; but 'tis ſuch a one as conſtancy and courage would eaſily vanquiſh: 'tis generally thought, there is in moſt at firſt ſome ſort of *Impetus* towards good, which if it were conſtantly cheriſhed, would ſoon turn into habit and nature; but fits and heats of religion, broken and interrupted eſſays and attempts, do only keep up ſo much guſt for virtue, as makes us a little diſguſt the enjoyments of ſin; and preſerves ſo much of conſcience, as ſerves to diſturb and perplex us. But be it how it will, let us ſuppoſe man in-

fected in his nature, and, what is worſe, over-run by vicious habits; yet even then, the ſame care, watchfulneſs, and diſcipline, that cures a chronical diſtemper of the body, would heal an habitual diſeaſe of the mind; and one may reform and enrich a degenerate mind with as little pains as it will coſt to recover a decay'd and ruinated eſtate.

But let me return to my main ſubject, that is, the conduct of *civil buſineſs*. Here, I am ſure, an uniform conſtancy and regular vigour is exacted by all: I have ſeldom obſerv'd men of great abilities do great things without great diligence and reſolution; I am ſure, I have ſeen them miſcarry foully, when perſons of lower talents have ſucceeded very well: nay, the truth is, vigour and reſolution are ſuch noble characters, that whoever appears endowed with them, can never himſelf miſcarry, tho' his deſigns ſometimes may: he can never be a loſer in honour and reputation, but generally appears a great man, even in the moſt unfortunate accidents, and makes even ill ſucceſs itſelf atteſt his ſufficiency. But commonly difficulties gives way to the diligence and reſolution of great men; and if to day will not, to morrow will, ſmile upon their enterprizes: there are lucky minutes in buſineſs, when what before had wind and tide againſt it, moves with the ſtream: Whither will he not then carry his point, who never lets ſlip the lucky moment through negligence, and never fails through cowardice or lazineſs, to urge and puſh on his good ſucceſs?

But

But how much ſoever *vigour* and *conſtancy* be commended as moſt ſerviceable to ſucceſs in buſineſs, as one of the greateſt perfections that man is capable of, and the beſt inſtrument of attaining all others; yet we muſt not forget, that the ſtrength of our nature is ſoon broken, if it be always ſtrained, and the fineſt parts are ſoon tired and diſpirited, if they be inceſſantly employ'd: That man has a deſign to carry on far nobler and more important than this, of *civil buſineſs*, and that ſo far at leaſt the pleaſures of life are to be mingled with its toils and troubles, as to enable us the better to undergo them: therefore,

Fourthly, The gentleman's time ought not to be ſo wholly taken up in buſineſs, as not to leave vacancies for *religion*, *meditation*, *friendſhip*, and *diverſion*. There are two extremes fatal to happineſs, to have no buſineſs at all, or ſo much as leaves no room for books or friends, for *meditation* or neceſſary *diverſion*: for this makes life very barren and very dull; it makes buſineſs mere drudgery, and places the great man in a more toilſome condition than the mean one, and makes him wiſh for the eaſe of his tenants and ſervants. Nor is this the only evil of an uninterrupted purſuit of worldly buſineſs; but, what is worſe, it extinguiſhes all guſt of virtue, all reliſh of heavenly things; and inſtead of the courage and peace, with which religion inſpires men, it leaves them without any rational ſupport or comfort, either conſuming, with perplexed and anxious thoughts

about the event of things; or, hardened into a neglect, if not contempt of religion, propoſing to themſelves no other or higher end of life, than the acquitting themſelves well in the ſtation they are, and aſcribing the iſſue of affairs to no other providence, than ſuch as they are daily wont to employ about them, and to ſuch other accidents as they have obſerv'd them ever and anon ſubject to.

When I demand a vacant time for religion, it muſt not be ſuppos'd that I do not look upon religion as the firſt and greateſt buſineſs of human life: it being in vain to gain the whole world for him who loſes his ſoul; or to be intent in preſerving or advancing the peace or welfare of the publick, for him whoſe mind is filled with diſorder and guilt: I do therefore ſuppoſe all the actions of the day ſo conducted, as to become inſtances of Chriſtian virtue: I ſuppoſe juſtice and integrity, courage and bounty, patience and gentleneſs, mingling themſelves in the diſcharge of every *civil buſineſs*. And then the religion for which I demand ſome vacant moments, is that of *publick* and *private devotion*; without which it is impoſſible for the great man either to preſerve reputation without, or peace within. *Publick devotion* is not only an act of worſhip due to God, but, in a gentleman, a teſtimony of the honour which he has for the community he is of, and an expreſſion of charity towards thoſe who are influenc'd by his example.

Nor

Nor is *private devotion* leſs neceſſary than *publick*; not only becauſe *publick* without *private* degenerates into formality, into a mere ſhew, without the power of godlineſs; nor yet becauſe every man's reputation flows firſt from his domeſticks, who can have no veneration for him, who appears to have none for his God; tho' even theſe reaſons ought not to be contemned; but eſpecially becauſe every man has particular wants, and particular obligations, and none more than the great one; and therefore muſt offer up to God his particular petitions and prayers. I cannot therefore tell how to think, that he who does not begin and cloſe the day with prayers to God, can believe there is one: He that does not invoke providence, ſeems to defy it; and he who ſacrificeth not to God, ſeems to me to ſacrifice only to his nets.

As to *meditation*, 'tis ſo eſſential a part of religion, and ſo indiſpenſible a preparative for *devotion*, that I ſhould not have placed it here by itſelf, did I not extend its deſign ſomething further. *Meditation* is that *act*, which, of all others, does moſt delight and nouriſh the mind; which, of all others, is moſt fit to raiſe and to ſtrengthen it. In other actions we ſeem to move mechanically; in this alone, rationally. In all other, our reaſon ſeems confin'd and fetter'd by I know not what preſcriptions, cuſtoms and circumſtances; in this alone it ſeems to enjoy its native freedom and liberty, rambling with an uncontroul'd *Impetus*, and with delight ſtretching and dilating itſelf. In all other things, the mind ſeems to be impreſs'd and

moulded by the matter and buſineſs about which it is converſant; but in this, it gives what forms and circumſtances it pleaſes, to both; in this, it has a kind of creative or productive power, and I know not what ſort of deſpotick ſovereignty. In a word, he who is ignorant of the force of *meditation*, is a ſtranger to the trueſt pleaſure of human life, to the moſt uſeful, taking, and natural act of the human ſoul. But I forget what I mainly intended, which was, to tell you, that the uſe of *meditation* conſiſts either in reflection or preparation, as regarding alike yeſterday and to morrow: 'Tis highly neceſſary, that he looks back upon his day paſt, who lies under ſo many temptations to waſte it; that he whoſe actions are of ſo much greater importance than thoſe of private men, and fall unavoidably under a more general and ſevere cenſure, do the more carefully ſcan them over. Nor is preparation leſs neceſſary than reflection: for this gives order to your affairs, and forms the mind into a fit and juſt *diſpoſition*; it prevents ſurprizes, removes difficulties, and gives beauty and ſteadineſs to your whole conduct.

As to *friendſhip* and *diverſion* I ſhall treat of them fully in their proper places; and therefore ſhall ſpeak but a word of them here. 'Tis a hard matter, it may be, for great men to have ſincere friends; but this being a purchaſe of ſo great a value, deſerves they ſhould lay out all their art and intereſt upon it: for beſides that advantage of *friendſhip* in every condition, that it clears our notions, corrects our errors, confirms our virtues, enlarges our joys, and leſſens our troubles;

troubles; it is to men in an eminent ſtation more peculiarly neceſſary, both as the ornament and ſupport of their fortune.

As to *diverſion*, it ever muſt be ſuch as may conſiſt with the dignity of the perſon, or the urgency of his employment; ſuch as may not leſſen his character, or waſte his time; ſuch as may refreſh and recruit nature, and from which he may return to his buſineſs with new vigour and new appetite: and it were very well, if diverſions were ſo wiſely contrived, that they might at once delight and improve the mind. I ſhould therefore think, that phyſick or huſbandry, the principles of any curious mechanick performances, muſick, architecture, and ſuch like, might be proper entertainments of vacant hours: but if the health of the body, as well as pleaſure of the mind, be aim'd at in *diverſion*, it were well to have always ready ſome wiſe friends, by whoſe help and converſation, the time you beſtow on the health of the body may not be utterly loſt to the mind. I am ſenſible, I have been guilty in this diſcourſe of the ſame fault which all, who write morals with any ſpirit, do generally fall into; that is, propoſing a greater perfection than is commonly attainable; and of forming my models and ideas, rather by ſpeculation than the practice of mankind: but this will be eaſily pardon'd by ſuch as remember, that the copy will ever fall ſhort of the original; and that men will eaſily of themſelves bend and accommodate the exacteſt rule to the frailties and imperfections of human life.

Nor do I again forget, when I preſs Gentlemen to the nobleſt heights of virtue, that they are expoſed to more numerous and more violent ſolicitations to vice than other men. I know it: but at the ſame time I remember too, that they always pretend to a higher ſpirit, and a more refined education: that their virtue always ſhines with a double luſtre; its own, and that of their fortune; ſo that moderate attainments in them make a greater ſhew, than the more perfect and accompliſh'd in men of a lower ſphere: and finally, that thoſe advantages and prerogatives which they enjoy by their birth and ſtation, do put them in a better condition than other men, to defend their true liberty, and to purſue thoſe methods which reaſon and virtue dictate.

CHAP. III.

Of the trading or negotiating life.

Sect. 1. *Rules relating to ſucceſs in trade. Firſt, That the trader be induſtrious. Secondly, That he be not above his profeſſion.*

Sect. 2. *Rules relating to his* religion. *Firſt, The trade muſt be a lawful one. Secondly, It muſt be manag'd with juſtice, truth and charity. Thirdly, It muſt not interfere with religion. Fourthly, The trader ought to propoſe to himſelf wiſe and rational* ends, *ſuch as are a* competency *for himſelf and family: the charitable aſſiſtance of others: a timely retirement or retreat from the buſtle and diſtractions of too much buſineſs.*

MY latter years have been ſpent moſtly among the trading part of mankind; and I have receiv'd many obligations from them; and I think myſelf bound to do them this right, to let the world know, that I have found more *honour* and *gratitude*, more *clearneſs* and *integrity* amongſt this ſort of men, than I ever could amongſt others, whoſe quality and education raiſed my expectations higher: it will be therefore no ſmall ſatisfaction to me, if any endeavours of mine can render them any conſiderable ſervice.

There is no condition of life free from temptations and difficulties apt to embroil our happineſs, and infect our innocence, and therefore neither

neither this of *traders*; the evils they are ſubject to may be reduced to two heads, either miſcarrying in *trade*, or in *religion*. I will therefore begin with ſuch rules as may ſerve to prevent the former, and then proceed to ſuch as concern the latter.

If we trace the ruin of ſuch, as fail or break, back to its original, we ſhall find it generally to be either *idleneſs* or *pride*. *Idleneſs*, the parent of all ſottiſh vices; *pride*, the parent of expenſive follies and ruinous projects. I will therefore lay down theſe two rules as the foundations of the *trader's* ſecular proſperity, *Firſt*, that he muſt be diligent and induſtrious: *Secondly*, that he muſt not be above his profeſſion.

1. He muſt be *diligent* and *induſtrious*. You ſeem born for *induſtry*; and though ſome pretend to be ſent into the world only to enjoy a fortune, 'tis plain you are firſt to raiſe one: and though there may be ſome fortunate men in the world, that ſeem to thrive rather by chance than virtue, and owe more to the care of others than their own; yet, I am ſure, in the ordinary methods of *providence*, *diligence* and *induſtry*, are the highway to *wealth* and *plenty*; *virtue* and *ſobriety* to wiſe and ſecure enjoyments. And I know not with what confidence men can promiſe themſelves the bleſſing and favour of God on any other terms. He has made nothing on purpoſe to be idle and uſeleſs: the heavenly bodies never ceaſe to yield their light and influence, nor the terreſtrial ones their fruit. We ourſelves do ſubſiſt by a continual

tinual motion; and ſhould our blood and ſpirits grow dull and ſluggiſh, our life muſt needs expire with their inactivity; *man is born to labour, as the ſparks fly upward*; our capacities and endowments deſtine and urge us to it; the neceſſities and want of this needy beggarly ſtate (in which nature, how kind ſoever it was to the golden age, does not furniſh us with any thing without *art* and *induſtry*) exact and demand it, and the laws of human ſociety oblige us to it: for it is but fit that every one ſhould contribute his ſhot for the entertainment of the publick; and that he ſhould not, like a drone, be feaſted and maintained by the labour and travail of others. And ſo far, laſtly, is Chriſtianity from abrograting this law of nature, that it earneſtly enforces it: *let ours learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful*; that is, that they be not a ſhame and burden to themſelves and families, to the commonwealth or Chriſtian profeſſion. Propoſe not then, I addreſs myſelf here to apprentices and beginners; propoſe not to exempt yourſelves from that univerſal law of labour and travail to which the whole creation is ſubjected; you eſpecially, who lie under more immediate and particular obligations to it. 'Tis an unaccountable folly for one, who is to make his fortune in the world, to apply himſelf to *trade*, rather as a *diverſion* than buſineſs, and to deſign it only as a ſupport and fund for ſloth and luxury: 'tis madneſs and phrenſy in any one to propoſe to be maſter of his time ere he be maſter of his *trade*; and to indulge his pleaſures, before he has made

proviſion

proviſion to defray the expence of them; and yet this, I doubt, is too general a practice; whereas would young men conſider the matter aright, they would find that they do but prevent their pleaſures, by gathering of them before they be ripe; and do but make their troubles and vexations endleſs, by indulging their eaſe and lazineſs too ſoon. Contradictious projects! to propoſe at once to live idly, and yet to thrive! to live pleaſurably, and grow rich! 'Tis true, there are many *traders*, who live in much eaſe and plenty, and make a very handſome figure in the world, and 'tis but fit there would be ſuch. *Trade* is the ſupport and ornament of kingdoms; and no man of ſenſe will any more envy the man of *trade* his wealth than the man of the ſword his honour, or the man of letters the abilities, his places and preferments: but if I could, I would have men grow up to all theſe by labour and induſtry, by an apprenticeſhip of ſobriety and virtue: I would have employment be the reward of merit: I would not have eaſe and pleaſure be raviſhed by the looſe and unworthy; but regularly poſſeſſed by ſuch as have taken pains to purchaſe both, and have ſenſe, experience, and virtue enough to enjoy them.

Secondly, The *trader* muſt not be above his calling. Pride and vanity are generally ſworn enemies, both to the content and proſperity of traders; but then it muſt be remembered, ſome are but lightly tinged; others, more thoroughly and deeply dyed with theſe vices: in ſome they produce only little comical affectations, and almoſt

almoſt innocent excurſions; but in others very fatal diſorders and irregularities. There is no gracefulneſs in any motion that is not natural; a man of low ſtature may add ſomething to his height, but nothing to his comelineſs, by ſtrutting upon ſtilts. Nor is there only an ungracefulneſs, but an uneaſineſs in all affected motions; we are all a little purblind and dimſighted in this world; and therefore walk more ſecurely in the way we are acquainted with; but for my part, when an error is only comical, and expoſes men no further than to a little raillery and cenſure, 'tis ſcarce worth my while to preſcribe to it; and I cannot tell whether it be worth every man's while to be at the charge of correcting a humour, which if it do a little expoſe him, does yet pleaſe him too: the pride and ambition which I would extirpate, is ſuch a one as I have obſerved fatal to the *tradeſman*'s fortune and repoſe; ſuch as tempts him to deſpiſe and neglect his trade, or puts him upon expences which it cannot maintain, or engages him in bold or hazardous projects: this is an error which I would fain reform, and methinks a few ſober reflections ſhould here prevail. What? can it be ſenſe to make a ſhew abroad at the expence of your content and peace at home? what? is it not much better to be modeſt and ſafe, to be humble and at eaſe, than to ſuffer daily anxieties and perplexities, and to have your mind always upon the rack, how to anſwer and ſatisfy the importunities of pride and vanity? 'tis worſe yet when a ſhort piece of pageantry ends in perpetual infamy; when this important humour

mour is nouriſhed by robbery and injuſtice, by fraud and cheat, committed upon widows and orphans, acquaintance and friends, and the neareſt relations. 'I muſt confeſs, I am amazed to think, that any one's pride ſhould be tickled by a falſe and fatal grandeur, upheld only by wrong and injuſtice, and reſolving in a moment into indelible ſhame and irretrievable ruin. For my part, I ſhould in this caſe look upon bravery, not as the marks of greatneſs, but ornaments of a ſacrifice; not as the pomp of a triumph, but a funeral; and my luſcious morſels, how pleaſing ſoever to my palate, would be ready to riſe and recoil in my ſtomach. As to thoſe who ſeem to ſcorn their profeſſion, I have but this to ſay, Let 'em find out a more thriving one before they leave the old one, before they deſert the profeſſion they were bred to, for its meanneſs; let them make ſure of a more honourable employment; or elſe, the ſcorn they load their trade with, will be want of ſenſe, not greatneſs of ſpirit; a lazy pride, not a generous ambition; and if ſo, I am ſure there is no profeſſion ſo mean as that of ſloth and looſeneſs.

Sect. 2. The ſecond ſort of rules are ſuch as concern the *religion* of the *trader* or *artizan:* for 'tis to little purpoſe that he thrive in his ſecular, if he run out in his Chriſtian calling; for this is but to be fortunate, and yet miſerable. Therefore,

Firſt, He muſt be ſure that his calling be lawful.

Secondly, That it be carried on with truth, juſtice, and charity.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, This his attendance on the buſineſs of this world do not extinguiſh his concern for a better; and his *trade* devour his *religion*, as *Pharaoh*'s lean kind did the fat ones.

Fourthly, That he propoſe to himſelf *proper* and *rational ends* of *trading*.

Firſt, He muſt be ſure that his calling be lawful; that is, ſuch as is neither forbidden by any law of God or the magiſtrate, nor does in its own nature miniſter to vice. But that I may not perplex men's minds with unneceſſary ſcruples, and tempt them to doubt of the lawfulneſs of all *trades*, that are any way made the inſtruments of ſin and folly; you muſt know, ſome things miniſter to ſin directly and neceſſarily; others only accidentally, and not by the immediate intention of the *artiſt* or *trader*, but the abuſe of others. The former ſort of trades are unlawful in themſelves, and no pretence can ſanctify the uſe of them. He that directly and immediately miniſters to a ſin, communicates in the guilt of it; as he that purveys for the luſt of others, partakes of the ſin of the adulterer and fornicator: but thoſe which miniſter not purpoſely and immediately but accidently, are yet in themſelves lawful. Nor ſhall the trader communicate in thoſe abuſes to which the luſts and vanities of others proſtitute them. Thus taverns are not unlawful, becauſe abuſed by intemperance; nor are all ſhops of clothing to be ſhut, becauſe thence people furniſh themſelves with ſuch things as inflame their immodeſty and pride: the reaſon

ſon is plainly this, becauſe the ſin may be ſeparated from the trade; that wine, whoſe full draughts are by ſome made uſe of to the defacing reaſon and enkindling luſt, may as well refreſh the weary and delight the moderate; thoſe garments, which adorn the proud and wanton, may be made uſe of to add luſtre to greatneſs. The inconvenience would be inſufferable, if every profeſſion which did but indirectly and caſually adminiſter to vice, were therefore ſinful: the courts of juſtice muſt be laid aſide, becauſe oftentimes the bar and bench have contributed to oppreſs, injure, and rob in form of law. The pulpit muſt be for ever ſilenc'd, becauſe men have ſometimes ſown the ſeeds of ſedition and ſlavery from thence. All the *arts*, either of war or peace, have ſometimes ſerv'd the cruelty of the one, and luxury of the other; and by conſequence would be baniſh'd out of all commonwealths. Yet here it muſt be confeſs'd, that the more or leſs tendency any trade hath to the promoting vice, it is in the ſame proportion the more or leſs eligible. And that it imports men, who love their *peace* and *happineſs* more than gain, not to debauch their calling themſelves, by proſtituting them to extravagances and exorbitances; and projecting profit from the intemperances and ſins, that is, the ruin of others: for 'tis not ſufficient to the peace and comfort of a man's mind, that his calling be innocent, if his conduct of it be not ſo too.

Secondly, *Trade* ought to be manag'd with *truth*, *juſtice*, and *charity*; for without theſe, 'tis only a more cleanly art of cheating or oppreſſion;

preſſion; ſins, which, I doubt, can receive but little excuſe or mitigation from the cuſtom and practice of them: Without theſe, *trade* cannot be regular and eaſy, nor gain comfortable and delightful; ſince no man can have any confidence in the protection of God, when the methods of his thriving are ſuch as merit vengeance, not a bleſſing. Nor can I ſee any thing that can betray men into lying and knavery, but the want of true ſenſe, as well as true faith; ſince tho' many by undue ways have more ſuddenly enriched themſelves, yet it is evident, that the wealth, which is more regularly purchaſed, is more pleaſant, durable, and laſting; and that honeſt and equitable dealing is the ſureſt, if not the ſpeedieſt way to wealth. Nor are there, I believe, many inſtances of men, who, if they underſtood their buſineſs, have ever ſuffered much by their uprightneſs and integrity in dealing; it being very hard to imagine, that a *trader* ſhould be a loſer by thoſe virtues which advance credit and reputation. But however this be, I am not now enquiring after *wealth*, but *happineſs*; to the obtainment of which, I am very poſitive, that the obſervation of theſe meaſures is indiſpenſible, ſince the contrary muſt needs prevert the mind, and intangle life: and as they extinguiſh in the ſoul all ſparks of *honour* and greatneſs; ſo muſt they its courage and confidence, tranquillity and peace, which can reſult from nothing, but the due moderation of our affections, and the conſcience of our integrity.

Thirdly, The *trader's* attendance on his calling must not discharge him from his attendance on *religion*. 'Tis true, 'tis commonly said, and generally admitted, that the duty of every one's secular calling is a part of *religion*; but this ought to be well understood, that so neither a veneration for religion breed a neglect of your callings, nor an over-fond opinion of the merit of industry in your calling (as if all virtue were comprised in it) breed a contempt of religion: 'Tis fit therefore to put you in mind, that arts and trades have not in themselves any direct and immediate tendency, either to the improvement of reason, or the production of virtue; they minister to the necessities of this world, not the glories of another; nor are they so much the works of a rational and spiritual, as of a mortal and indigent being: from whence it follows, that tho' they are necessary to the present state of things, yet can they deserve to employ you no longer than either the publick benefit or private convenience require it; and that you are then only wisely taken up about these, when neither your endowments nor fortunes capacitate you for a life more immediately and directly serviceable to the purposes of reason and revelation: and finally, that the works of a secular profession are then only acceptable sacrifices to God, when consecrated by wise principles and virtues cleaving to and mingling with them. Do not therefore think, that a pretence of business can cancel your obligations to the duties of Christianity. If a man could fancy, which I never

never can, buſineſs and religion incompatible, 'tis evident which were to be preferred; ſince, if the will of God were ſo, it is much better to be ſtarved than to be damned. But without carrying the Matter ſo far, 'tis plain that *virtue* and *religion*, with a competency, render men abundantly more happy than wealth can do, if attended with the neglect or contempt of either: 'Tis the riches of the mind make men great and happy; the ignorant and irreligious can never be either. Let no man therefore think that he ſuffers any damage, if he be forced to maintain his *virtue* and *religion* by the diminution of his *trade*; tho' I cannot comprehend that there can be a neceſſity of this: for I have never yet obſerved any man ſo oppreſſed and overcharged with buſineſs, as not to find time for pleaſure, when he has pretended he could find none for religion. In a word, the neglect of religion is capable of no excuſe; not only becauſe your future, but preſent happineſs depends upon it. Modeſty or moderation, to curb a vain and ambitious thirſt of wealth; faith or confidence in the providence of God, to reſtrain you from mean, baſe, and unlawful courſes; ſelf-reſignation to prevent anxiety, and thoſe fears, to which the uncertainties, changes, and revolutions of times and trade make men ſubject, ſeem to me as neceſſary to the peace and happineſs of a *trader*, as a competent ſtock, induſtry or ſkill, can be to his worldly ſucceſs or proſperity: and tho' men, who allow themſelves no time, either for attendance upon publick religion,

or private meditation, may talk finely of these virtues by way of notion and speculation, it is impossible they should be really possess'd of them. *How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours; and whose talk is of bullocks?* Which the author of *Ecclesiasticus*, by a parity of reason, extends further to all *traders* and *artisans*, who are in like manner wholly taken up in their art. I could therefore wish, that those words of our Saviour, *What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul*, were writ in capital letters in the most conspicuous place of the compting-house and the shop, that you might ever and anon be put in mind, that there is one thing more necessary, even than the diligent and prosperous management of your trade, namely, religion. For to what purpose is it, that your books are well kept, that there is order and regularity in the whole conduct of your trades, if at the same time your neglected hearts lie, like the field of the sluggard, waste and open, overgrown with briars and thorns, and weeds; or like a confused and intangled stock of an unskilful trader, which wastes and decays each day? To what purpose is it, that you be punctual dealers towards men, if you be bankrupts towards God? To what purpose is it that you have credit and *honour* upon the *'Change*, if you be poor and beggarly, shameful and sneaking in yourselves within, having your souls destitute of any true peace,

peace, wealth or courage; and you ſhift the accuſations and importunities of conſcience, as much as a wretched debtor would a ſevere and inexorable creditor? Ah! while you purſue the world, forget not that there is a heaven; and while you make a proviſion for time, make ſome too for eternity: Let your ſtating your accompts with men, put you in mind of clearing your accompts with God; and let theſe two things never be out of your thoughts; firſt, that it is God who gives man power to get wealth, and next, that it is not a clear eſtate, but a clear ſoul, that makes man happy; I mean a ſoul freed from ſilly and vile affections, and enrich'd with the knowledge and love of God and goodneſs.

Fourthly, The *trader* muſt propoſe to himſelf proper and rational ends of *trading*: for whoever propoſes to himſelf vain and falſe ones, will intangle his life in manifold troubles and temptations, and loſe his *reaſon*, *religion* and *tranquillity*, in the windings and mazes of wretched fancies and unaccountable projects. Theſe ends of *trading* I take to be theſe three: *Firſt*, A competent and honeſt ſupport of yourſelves and families. *Secondly*, A charitable ſuccour and relief of others. *Thirdly*, A timely retreat from a ſecular calling, to a contemplative life.

Firſt, A competent and honeſt ſupport of yourſelves and families. This end is pointed out by the Apoſtle, *Tit.* iii. 14. and called *neceſſary uſes*, i. e. We muſt deſign in *trade* the ſupport of the neceſſities, not luſt of nature.

ture. And were not all *trades* over-ſtock'd, and conſequently the obſervation ſuperfluous, I ſhould tell you, that publick as well as private neceſſities were here to be underſtood. Nor is your care here limited to your own neceſſities only, but thoſe alſo of your children and poſterity demand their ſhare in it; but then, leſt under this pretence you extend your deſires beyond all bounds, you are to remember, that in reſolving the meaſures of this proviſion, you are not to take counſel of your own ambition, or the wanton expectations of your children; that proviſion for them is wiſeſt, which lays a ſufficient foundation for their induſtry to build on, and leaves them under an obligation to buſineſs and employment. And is not this enough? To what purpoſe ſhould men toil, cark, and pinch, to make their families rich and great; that is, lazy and wanton, to leave them an eſtate which their own example proves more than neceſſary; for moſt of thoſe that do ſo, have made little uſe of it themſelves? Miſtake me not? I do not think it unlawful to be rich, or to leave one's family ſo; but I think it fooliſh and ſinful too, to ſacrifice the peace of one's mind, and the eaſe of one's life, to the luſt of riches: I think it ſilly and vicious to raiſe a family by meanneſs and ſordidneſs, or to lay the foundation of children's greatneſs in one's own infamy. In ſhort, 'tis not wealth, but an inordinate paſſion for it, which I condemn: Proſperity is the gift of God, a common reward of Chriſtian virtues: for Chriſtianity is ſaid to *have the promiſes of this life, and*

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that which is to come. Wealth then may be received, but it must not be designed as your first and chief end. Thus *fame, honour, power,* are great blessings and favours of heaven; but whoever immoderately thirsts after the one or the other, is ambitious and vain-glorious. You may receive temporal good things with gratitude, and enjoy them with moderation; but if you dote upon them, you violate the vow of your baptism, and virtually renounce your faith: for would not this be to forget that heaven were your kingdom and country, and earth the place of your *exile,* or, at best, pilgrimage? This is a lesson can never be too often inculcated, not only on the account of that violent opposition 'tis almost every-where encounter'd with; but also the vast importance 'tis of to the quiet and contentment of a *trading life:* This one thing is the philosophy the *trader* should be ever studying, the wisdom he should be daily pursuing; that is, a true and just moderation of his desires of wealth. Did man know how to bound his desires by the necessities or conveniencies of human life; could he regulate his appetites by the modesty and moderation of christianity, not by custom and fancy; I am confident this one thing alone would rescue him from the far greater part of evils and incumbrances which infest human life: vanity and ambition, envy and emulation, wantonness and fancy, create most of those difficulties and necessities which stain the beauty, disturb the peace and order, and destroy the pleasure of life. When men's desires and aims are

too big for their callings, they are unavoidably plunged into discontent and doubtful projects; and if they sink not finally into ruin, they cannot be held up but by such an anxious and restless prosecution of the world, as looks rather like hurry or distraction, than *trade* or employment. I can therefore never think a *tradesman* happy, till he has modesty enough to find content in the revenue of a moderate and easy trade; till he understands what are the bounds his nature, and his station sets him; and tho' he know how to enjoy a great fortune, does never want one; has sense enough to use it, and virtue enough not to let his happiness depend upon it.

Secondly, A charitable succour and relief of others. 'Tis confessed by all, that men are born, not for themselves only, but for others too: and God, the dispenser of temporal wealth, commands such as are rich in this world, to be rich in good works too: but it is always to be provided, that justice do first take place, and then charity. This direction therefore supposes the *trader*'s accounts to stand fair; it supposes him to have discharged the duties which he owes to his relatives and dependants, or else to have none. I will not insist on the obligation or pleasure of charity; I will not press you to it by the interest of your present, and future *happiness*: For the truth is, to do right to the trading world, there is no rank or order of men in the kingdom, that is more sensible of the duty of charity, or more inclined and disposed to it; none that give more eminent proofs of it while living, or leave more glori-

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ous monuments of it behind them. One thing only I will take upon me to recommend to you; that is, the advice of *Solomon*; *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest:* That is, whatever good you design to do, do it speedily, and, as much as in you lies, be your own executors. How often are excellent purposes strangled in the birth by an unexpected death! How frequently are they perverted by the corruption and negligence of those to whose inspection they are committed! Besides, this way you shall reap the fruit of your own plantations; you will enjoy the pleasure and satisfaction resulting from the perfection, beauty, and good contrivance of the foundations you have laid; or you will be able to supply the defects, or correct the errors of your model, and prevent those future miscarriages which such designs are liable to. Tho' all this be very much, yet it is but the least part of what you will reap from being yourselves the executors of your own bounty; you will be sure that you dedicate it to charity, not to vanity; that you are building alms-houses for the living, not tombs and pyramids for the dead; you will escape the common cheat and imposture the rich put upon themselves, while they entangle themselves in covetousness all their lives, under pretence of designing mighty things after death.

Thirdly, The *tradesman* ought to propose to himself a timely retreat, *i. e.* if the necessities

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of this indigent ſtate will give way to it. which ſeems to me natural, to finiſh buſineſs ere we finiſh life; to lay down our burden ere we tire and fall under the weight of it; and quit troubleſome employments, before our bungling diſcharge of them proclaim the decay of our parts and ſtrength, and the increaſe of our avarice and ambition: Nay, the very continuance of the ſame cares for the world, which look'd before like prudence, will in old age be reckon'd ſin and folly: To *trade*, is but to make proviſion for life; and therefore ſince common ſenſe will tell us, that we muſt not be always providing for life, and never live; 'tis plain, men ought, if they may, at length break off their trade, or at leaſt ſo contract it, that it may be rather diverſion than travail: as *Solomon* ſends us to the ants to learn induſtry, ſo might he to learn wiſdom too; the enjoyment of their treaſure in the winter, being no leſs an inſtance of the one, than their labour in laying it up in the ſummer, of the other. Beſides, in ripe years the advice of the prophet ſeems to be addreſs'd to every man, *Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die, and not live*; *i. e.* ſtate your accompts, ſettle your fortune, compoſe the differences of your family, and fix your children ſo, that you may be able to diſcern what courſe they will ſteer when you are gone, and to correct any error they are apt to fall into, while you live, which may otherwiſe, when you are dead, prove incorrigible and deſtructive. If theſe motives, taken from decency, prudence and mortality, ſeem too light, there is another of more weight and moment

ment behind; that is, the consideration of your eternal interest. 'Tis highly necessary to leave the world before you be torn from it, and to acquaint yourselves more familiarly with another world, before you pass into it to make your abode in it for ever. Certainly it requires some time to prepare the soul for death and judgment; and that man will be very unfit for either, who is carried from the counter to the grave, and from the entanglements of secular cares to the tribunal of God. But besides the benefits which you will find in retirement, the prospect and proposal of it has many in it; the hopes of a sabbatick year in life, will ease the weight and travail of those that precede it; and a design of retreating from trade and business, will be apt to reduce men to pass their first years with more moderation and abstinence, that they may the sooner provide the means of an easy or honourable retirement.

These rules well observ'd, would free the negotiating life from all the great evils and inconveniencies it is subject to. Business, as it was in the time of innocence, would be, not the cure, but the blessing of mankind; and trade would be as easy and innocent, if not as pleasant, as *Adam*'s husbandry in his garden: for thus industry would be without drudgery, and care without anxiety; commerce would be carried on without any mean or ill artifices, without impatient and tormenting designs, or tiresome and vexatious disappointments. What need would there be of shifts and equivocations, of fraud and circumvention, if a man

man had faith enough to believe, that God's bleſſing upon his induſtry were the only way to grow truly rich; I mean, to get, if not ſo much as he would, yet as much as would be good for him? What temptation would a man lie under to bondage and drudgery, or to perplexity and anxiety, if he could contain his deſires within thoſe narrow bounds which nature and his ſtation have preſcribed him? What fears could diſquiet the mind, which were form'd into an entire reſignation to, and dependence upon God? Or, how could the world inſnare that ſoul which allots a proper time for publick religion, and private meditation? In a word, theſe rules being follow'd, men would not only avoid the common rocks on which the happineſs and fortune of the *trader* generally daſhes, but alſo attain the end of this ſort of active life; they would get eſtates in their younger years, and enjoy them in their riper: nay, no portion of life would want its proper and ſeaſonable enjoyments; they would in the midſt of buſineſs preſerve their innocence, and when they did retire from it, thy would perfect that religion which they could before but begin, and enrich, and adorn, and entertain the ſoul, which they could but guard and defend before, and ſcarcely maintain in life; I mean, ſpiritual life.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of a contemplative life.

For whom this chapter is design'd; what kind of life is to be underſtood by a contemplative one. Sect. 1. *The ends or reaſons warranting the choice of ſuch a life: Firſt,* Enjoyment: *Secondly,* Self-Preſervation *from the aſſaults of* temptation: *Thirdly, The better ſerving the* world: *Fourthly, A more entire dedication of one's ſelf to God.* Sect. 2. *The conditions, or qualifications neceſſary to a* contemplative life: *Firſt, A* plentiful fortune: *Secondly, A* peaceful *and* humble diſpoſition: *Thirdly, A* good underſtanding. Sect. 3. *The regulation of a* contemplative life; *with reſpect, Firſt, To* time: *Secondly, To* place: *Thirdly, To the* exerciſe, *or* employment *of a* retir'd life: *The* concluſion, *containing the pleaſure and happineſs of a* contemplative life.

THE firſt thing that offer'd itſelf to my thoughts, taking a view of this ſubject, was the collegiate life of ſcholars in the univerſities: but beſides, that here they do not ſo much deſign to retire from the world, as to prepare themſelves for it, I had reaſon to think, whatever ſervice I could propoſe to do the publick, by any advice I could here offer, my zeal could never be able to atone for my preſumption; ſince theſe ſeminaries of learning are under the conduct

conduct and direction of the ableſt, not of this age only, but of thoſe paſt: I do not therefore calculate this diſcourſe for theſe, but for perſons of another education, and under no direction but their own; for ſuch who make their retreat from the world, tired and ſated with it; for ſuch whoſe inclination or fortune caſts them upon a quiet, private, and unactive life. To theſe, I offer myſelf a companion: I would enter with them into their privacies, and aſſiſt them to paſs their hours with true pleaſure and innocence. I would inſpire them, if I could, with wiſe and excellent thoughts; I would engage them in the moſt neceſſary and moſt delightful buſineſs of human life, and guard them againſt thoſe evils and follies, which are apt to inſinuate themſelves into the moſt ſolitary life.

I muſt here, in the next place, repeat an obſervation, which, I think, I have ſomewhere before made, that the life of man muſt neither be wholly contemplative, nor wholly active: for as action and buſineſs, without any meditation, is apt to alienate the mind from God and virtue, to corrupt all that is great and generous, and truly wiſe in it, and wed it wholly to the world; ſo I doubt, a life ſpent wholly in contemplation, without any mixture of action. will prove fruitleſs and unprofitable; and men condemned to utter ſolitude, like the trees and ſhrubs of the wilderneſs, would grow wild and ſavage, luxuriant in leaves, but their fruit, if they brought forth any, ſour and ſmall. They forget the nature and the

the duty of man; and talk not ſeraphically, but fantaſtically, whoever perſuade him to give up himſelf entirely to contemplation. Man is yet a mixt and compound being; when he becomes all ſpirit, let him be all thought: he is yet a citizen of this world, tho' he be deſtined for another: let him not forget, that there are virtues becoming him as ſuch: let him live by intuition when he comes into the perfect light, and enters into the beatifick preſence: let him live by raptures when he is come into a world where wants and frailties, pains and evils, cannot enter. In the mean time, let man content himſelf with human virtue, and in this low probationary ſtate, not dream of the flights which only angels take. Having thus taken care, firſt to raiſe no expectation in my reader, which might afterwards be fruſtrated; and next, prevented his being betrayed into any extravagance, by projecting a more abſtracted life than the nature of man and the world will admit, I will now proceed to diſcourſe of theſe three things:

Firſt, The *reaſon* and *ends* of a *contemplative life*.
Secondly The *neceſſary qualifications* for it.
And, *Thirdly*, the due *regulations* of it.

Firſt, Of the *reaſons*, &c. Some propoſe to themſelves eaſe and enjoyment, as the great end and deſign of their retirement: now, tho' this be a mean and low project, little becoming the excellence of our Chriſtian profeſſion, yet

yet I cannot but acknowledge, that it ſeems to me an abſurd and irrational thing, to wear out life in a continual hurry or drudgery; and I cannot but think it reaſonable, that men ſhould one time or other allow eaſe to the body, and quiet to the mind; would ſet both free from their ſervitude to the world, and enjoy the wealth which they have got together, and eat the fruit of their travail and care. But tho' this be true, yet if men do quit the buſineſs, only to give themſelves up to the pleaſures of the world; if they exchange their anxiety and toil for luxury and ſenſuality, and inſtead of being induſtrious, plodding, and thriving traders, become idle, or, which is worſe, looſe and riotous country-gentlemen; this, I muſt confeſs, is but a miſerable change; this is but to prophane retirement, abuſe plenty, and waſte that precious time which God has made them maſters of; this, in a word, is not for a man to quit his ſlavery, but to exchange his maſters; for as to the intereſt of another life, and the true end of this, 'tis much the ſame thing, whether a man be a ſervant to pleaſure and ſloth, or to covetouſneſs and ambition. The ſum of this matter is plainly this; 'tis undoubtedly lawful for ſuch as have been long toiled in the purſuit of the world, to retire and enjoy themſelves and their friends; nay, further, I count them happy, who ſeem born not to ſtruggle and contend with the world, but to enjoy it. But if by *enjoyment* be here underſtood, only the gratification of the humour by outward, tho' innocent pleaſures, I muſt affirm, that this is too mean, too low,

low, to be the chief end, either of the one's entrance into the world, or the other's retreat from it: but if, which is worſe, by *Enjoyment* be here meant growing fat with good eating and drinking, or, as it were, rank and rotten through eaſe and ſloth; I deny this to be the *enjoyment* of a man, much leſs of a philoſopher or Chriſtian: the enjoyment of a private life, or philoſophical receſs, ought to conſiſt in peace and order, in harmony and exultation, in a holy calm and ſerenity; in which, as in a clear day, from the top of ſome advantageous height, we *enjoy* an enlarg'd and delightful proſpect. When we look backwards, we behold a wide ſea covered with a vaſt number of all ſorts of veſſels, toſſed up and down at the mercy of winds and waves; ſome few ſeem to make out with a ſteady courſe, but are immediately encounter'd with croſs winds and ſtorms; a very few indeed, do return in triumph homewards, and of theſe, ſome miſcarrying almoſt in ſight of port; of all the reſt, a great part, with much toil and difficulty, do ſcarcely live in ſtreſs of ſeas and weather; but the far greater part do ſuffer wreck, and ſcatter their miſerable ruins on every coaſt: but when we look forward, we diſcover a rich and ſecure country, thinly inhabited indeed, but fill'd with all the marks of joy and victory. But whither will my imagination lead me? the enjoyment of the retir'd is to conſiſt in the preſent reflections they make on their eſcape out of a tempeſtuous world; in the commerce and intercourſe they maintain with that above; in a calm and leiſurely ſurvey of all the various and wondrous works

of God, the works of grace and nature: and laſtly, in a very intimate and familiar acquaintance with themſelves, and the daily habitual practice of pleaſing perfect virtues.

Secondly, One true end of *retirement* may be ſelf-defence or preſervation. An active life is a ſtate of war, and the world is an hoſtile country: ſnares and ambuſhes are laid every where for us; and ever and anon temptations, worldly and fleſhly luſts, which St. *Peter* tells us, do *war againſt the ſoul*, do endeavour either to court and betray us, or to drive and force us into death and ruin: therefore, if we be conſcious to ourſelves of our own weakneſs, we have reaſon not to expoſe ourſelves to dangers, which we have not courage nor ſtrength enough to vanquiſh; and to chuſe retirement, not as a ſtate of perfection, but ſafety. The meaſures of grace, the ſtrength of reaſon, and the inclinations of nature, are very different in different men: whoever therefore, upon the beſt ſurvey he can make of his own forces, and after ſome not inſincere trials, finds himſelf no match for the world, unable to countermine its policies, and oppoſe its power; ſuch a one, if he can, may, nay, I believe, ought to retire from the world, as from the face of too potent an enemy: for tho' war be fuller of glory, peace is full of ſecurity; and tho' an active and buſy life be in itſelf more ſerviceable to the good of mankind, and the honour of God, yet in this caſe a poor Chriſtian may prefer a contemplative one as the ſecurer; and this is not to decline the ſervice of God and man, but ſin and danger;

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'tis not to prefer eaſe and ſecurity before ſpiritual induſtry and glory, but before a raſh preſumption, and a fatal defeat or overthrow.

Thirdly, Another end of *retirement* may be, to render us more beneficial to the world. The different talents of different perſons do ſeem to mark them out and deſtine them to different ſorts of life. There are, if I may ſo ſpeak, active and contemplative gifts; and 'tis a great felicity for any one to be able to know himſelf ſo well, as to diſcern what the God of nature has deſign'd him for. Some, who are a diſgrace to a publick ſtation, would be an ornament to a private one: many, who act but aukwardly, think and meditate very wiſely and accurately; and ſome, who do but expoſe themſelves in buſineſs, would paſs very well in retirement, and prove excellent examples of innocence and virtue, and wonderfully oblige by their good nature, ſweetneſs and charity, all ſuch as ſhould live within the reach of their influence. None are wont more earneſtly to covet retirement, than ſuch who are naturally addicted to learning; men too plain, or too great for a crafty and ſubtil world; too generous, tender, and eaſy, for a buſtling, vexatious and ſtingy one: theſe are the men, who, when they are maſters of their wiſhes, ſeem more particularly obliged to dedicate themſelves to ſome eminent ſervice of the publick: theſe muſt not bury their talents, but ripen them in quiet and retirement; like guardian-angels, they ſhould procure the honour and happineſs of the places, which they ſeldom or never appear to; and

withdrawing only, not to avoid the ſervice, but the foolery of the world, they muſt ever maintain an active charity and compaſſion for thoſe they leave behind, caught and entangled in it; and muſt out of gratitude travail to obtain ſome bleſſing or other upon that government, to whoſe protection they owe the comforts and ſecurity of their retreat. But tho' this direction do more immediately concern ſuch as theſe, that is, men of parts; yet ſure, there are none utterly exempt from this obligation of procuring the publick good in their proportion. Who is there ſo deſtitute of the gifts of grace, nature, or fortune, as to have no mite to caſt into the publick treaſury? He, that dares not pretend to attempt the enlightning and reforming the world, can yet adviſe and comfort his ignorant or afflicted neighbour: he, who cannot give advice at all, my yet give alms, which very often is as ſolid and ſubſtantial a benefit: and he that cannot do this, can yet never be excuſed from offering up daily prayers for the peace and welfare of his country, for the preſervation and edification of the church, for the converſion of ſinners, *&c.* Nay, he may proceed to what particularities he ſhall ſee fit or neceſſary, both in his petitions and thankſgivings; and from theſe interceſſions, both the publick and private may, for what I know, reap more true and valuable benefit, than from the works and labours of the learned, or from the alms and bounty of the rich. To conclude; he, that leads the moſt private and ſequeſtred life, and is too of the pooreſt endowments, can yet

yet never be ſuppoſed utterly incapable of rendring any the leaſt ſervice to others; ſince the ſingle example of virtue and integrity, and the warmth of a pious and edifying converſation, is of the greateſt uſe. Some way or other therefore, the moſt ſolitary life ought to ſerve the publick, that ſo retirement may not miniſter to wantonneſs and ſloth, but piety and virtue; and the world may not loſe a member, but enjoy its ſervice in its proper place, and moſt effectual manner.

Fourthly, The main end of retirement from the world ſhould be, I think, to dedicate ourſelves more entirely to God. The philoſopher thought indeed a contemplative life the moſt happy one, but thought it too a bleſſing too great for mortal man, too high for this frail nature, and above the ſtate and condition of this world. He had a great deal of reaſon on his ſide: yet muſt we preſs on towards that perfection which we cannot attain; and it is a ſufficient reaſon for our doing ſo, that we ſhall thus approach nearer to it: tho' therefore what ſome monkiſh authors have writ of a ſolitary life, equalling almoſt the duties and pleaſures of it, to thoſe of an angelical one; tho' this, I ſay, may ſeem rather holy romance and enthuſiaſm, than grave and ſound doctrine, yet ſure it cannot be denied, but that the prophets, the *Nazarites*, and the *Eſſenes* among the *Jews*, and many devout and excellent perſons amongſt the Chriſtians, as well in the pureſt as corrupteſt ages of the church, have choſe and coveted ſolitude and deſarts; I mean not uninhabited

places (for that, if it were ſo, was an exceſs and extravagance) but calm and ſilent retreats from the noiſe and impertinence, from the hurry and diſtraction of much buſineſs and much acquaintance: and ſince they did ſo, their examples ſeem to teach us, that this ſtate may be made eminently uſeful to our own good, and God's glory: here a man ſeems to have little elſe to do, but to praiſe God and improve himſelf; to expiate the errors of his paſt life, and to correct and ſubdue whatever he feels amiſs in himſelf at preſent: to perfect and augmen this graces, and to dreſs and adorn his ſoul for the feſtival ſolemnities and triumph of another world: now he ſeems to have nothing to do, but to begin his hallelujahs, to advance into the borders and confines of heaven, by faith and devotion; and from the heights of meditation, to ſurvey, as from the next advantageous hill, the riches and pleaſures of that *Canaan* which he ſhall in a moment enter into: and by this method, no doubt of it, as he ſhall enlarge his appetite and capacity of happineſs, ſo ſhall he enlarge his ſhare in it: by this method he ſhall adorn religion, and repreſent it to the world as moſt lovely and uſeful; he ſhall experiment it to be unſpeakably delightful in itſelf; he ſhall render the world more eaſy to him, and heaven more deſireable; and when he comes to the banks of *Jordan*, that is, of death, which parts this world from the other, he ſhall find the ſtreams of it divided to make him way; that is, the troubles and terrors of it diſſipated, and he ſhall preſs through it full of humble gratitude for the bleſſings

bleſſings of his paſt life, and raviſhing hopes and deſires of thoſe of the future.

Theſe are the proper, and rational ends of withdrawing from the world; tho' I am not ignorant, that there may be ſeveral other inducements to it; ſuch are the digeſting a diſcontent or diſgrace, the curing ſome paſſion, which would be otherwiſe nouriſhed by converſing with its object, and the mere eſcaping from the troubles and noiſe of the world: and as ſome men are forc'd out of their retreats into the world, not without great ſervice to the publick; ſo there are others, who, if they had ſenſe enough to know themſelves, or modeſty enough to hear the advice of their friends, ſhould betake themſelves to a private life, to prevent the miſchiefs in which they are like to involve themſelves and others in a publick one; ſuch are men of bold and enterpriſing tempers, without ſufficiency; men of zeal and activity, without underſtanding. But I deſign'd not here ſo much to conſider what might induce men to embrace a quiet ſilent life, as what ends they were to propoſe to themſelves when they were in it; which having done, I will paſs on to the ſecond thing.

Sect. 2. The *Qualifications* which fit men for a *retired Life*; and theſe are, I think, three.

Firſt, A plentiful, or at leaſt, competent fortune.

Secondly, A mild and humble diſpoſition, or, at leaſt, a quiet and compoſed mind.

Thirdly, A good underſtanding.

Firſt, A plentiful fortune. 'Tis true, that a competency is ſufficient to render a retired life eaſy; and when any one betakes himſelf to it as a refuge or ſanctuary againſt the hoſtilities and perſecution of temptations, this is abundantly enough: but where a contemplative life is a matter of choice, not neceſſity, a plentiful fortune is of great uſe, and a great ornament; it will make the examples of a man's virtue ſhine with a clearer luſtre and greater authority; it will enable him to do many works of charity, which ſhall have much delight in them, without toil and diſturbance; it will furniſh him with all uſeful means of publick and private devotion, and with whatever is neceſſary to enable him to paſs his time both delightfully and rationally. I think I have expreſſed my thoughts clearly; but to prevent all miſtakes, I will add, by a plentiful fortune, I do not mean a great one: this is more commonly burdenſome, than uſeful to a private life; and more apt to incumber it, than promote the true ends of it. In my retirement, I would have decency and order, but not ſtate and ſhew; I would have comely plenty, but not a toilſome affluence: for the buſineſs of ſolitude is to raiſe the mind, not to entangle and enſlave it. But the meaſures of this wealth muſt finally be determined by every man's own boſom; for it ought to be proportioned to the temper and genius, to the capacities and abilities of the perſon who retires, and to the more imme-

immediate design and ends of his retirement. And after all, there is no greater stress to be laid upon this qualification than this: it is convenient, but not essential; tho' a wise man may make an excellent use of it, 'tis not so absolutely and indispensibly necessary, but that he may be happy without it, both in publick and private. For,

Secondly, The pleasure and success of retirement depend much more upon a man's temper and genius, that it be calm and quiet, that it be meek and humble; and if it be not naturally so, it must be made so: for a proud and ambitious, a restless and turbulent person, will in vain seek for that rest and repose in sequestring himself from the world, which is to be found only by the subduing his passions, and reforming his nature. He that is fond of opinion and esteem; he that is at the disposal of fancy and humour, and is not able to shake off the yoke of fashions and customs, will find much to torment him, but nothing to improve or delight him in his retirement: but on the other hand, the meek and humble man will find his garden a paradise, and his solitude a conversing with God and heaven; will enjoy the present without any farther prospect or ambition: meditate without any distraction; worship and praise God, as if he had no other business or design; and do all the good he can in his little sphere, as if it were the only pleasure and entertainment of the life he had chose. 'Tis one of the great privileges of retirement, to be able to neglect fantastick

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and imaginary good, and purſue after that only which is ſolid and ſubſtantial; to be the maſters of our own time and actions, and to model life by our own reaſon and inclinations, not the fancies and humours of others. 'Tis the great advantage of retirement, that a man has all the pleaſure his ſoul deſires, within his own reach, that all of the world that is grateful to him, is to be found within the verge of his private abode: he therefore, whoſe mind gads abroad, and hankers after foreign pleaſures, who is tainted with envy or emulation, who hunts after eſteem, and is diſcompoſed by the fancy and cenſures of others, muddies the pure ſtream, corrupts and adulterates the true taſte and reliſh of a retired life: this therefore ought to be the firſt endeavour of him who ſeeks happineſs in a retreat; to free his mind from all thoſe buſy or ambitious paſſions, which will diſturb his repoſe, and corrupt his taſte; and to reduce it to its native purity and ſimplicity, in which it will be able to reliſh the bleſſing of true liberty, of eaſy and innocent pleaſures, of true and artleſs friendſhip, of regular and undiſturbed devotion; and finally of calm and elevated meditation.

Thirdly, A good underſtanding is a neceſſary qualification for retirement. It requires no little prudence to guard ourſelves againſt thoſe evils or impertinences which will be apt to invade, or inſinuate themſelves into our ſolitude; decently to decline buſineſs, acquaintance, ceremonies, diverſions; I mean ſuperfluous and unneceſſary, which will rob us of our time and

and liberty, and obſtruct us in all the wiſe ends we propoſe to ourſelves; is a matter of no ordinary dexterity and addreſs. Nor does it require leſs underſtanding to preſerve the peace and order of a private family: and yet 'tis in vain to ſhun the infection that is abroad, if more fatal and ſtubborn maladies reign at home. Nay, further, the family of the contemplative man ought not only to give him no diſturbances, but, if poſſible, it ought to be moulded and compoſed to his own humour, and animated by inclinations, ſomewhat at leaſt a-kin to his. Nay, after all, let us ſuppoſe the man ſo entirely ſequeſtred, as to be utterly diſengaged from all other intereſt but his own, to have no other dependance upon any other's motion, to have none but himſelf to regard, no other to pleaſe, no other to improve: even here I cannot tell whether ſo abſolute a liberty do not need the greater wiſdom to moderate and govern it; and whether it do not require a larger capacity to find a proper and wiſe employment, for one whoſe fortune has tied him to none at all: they are no ordinary endowments which will enable one, looſe and free from all buſineſs, to ſpend his time profitably and pleaſantly; and yet, if he do not, he will be liable to the worſt of evils; he will diſſolve and putrify in ſloth, or elſe turn ſour and ſavage, churliſh and brutiſh through ignorance, diſguſt, and diſcontent; nauſeated with a life that affords him nothing new, nothing taking. But the book of nature lies open to him! 'Tis true; but he cannot read it; 'tis not every vulger eye that diſcerns the delicate

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touches of a ſkilful pencil, the curious and ſubtil mixtures of light and ſhade in a well-drawn piece; 'tis not every ſpectator can judge of the beauty, ſtrength, and convenience of a well contriv'd building. But his cabinet may be well furniſh'd, 'tis true; but if the man have nothing bookiſh in him, if he have no genius for eloquence, no ear for the muſick of wit and fancy, no judgment for hiſtory, no comprehenſion for arts or ſciences; what is a cabinet to him, tho' furniſh'd ever ſo well, either for uſe or rarity? 'Tis only fit to be ſhewn, or to ſleep in: for after all the coſt and ſkill laid out upon it, the couch is the beſt furniture in it. But there is friendſhip! There is; the name indeed there is, but the thing is too divine: a low and groveling ſoul, a dull and impenetrable temper, cannot diſcern the charms, or taſte the ſweets of friendſhip. What is that familiarity, which is incapable of tenderneſs or paſſion? What is that converſation which is incapable of variety, or depth of wit or judgment? But there is religion, there is devotion, a boundleſs field of profit and delight! 'Tis true, and the principles of this are plain and ſtrong, able to move the man of loweſt capacity to decline evil, follow his calling, and do good in proportion to his ſenſe and ability: but as to ſeraphick contemplative religion, for this to be the life and buſineſs of man, it requires a vaſt capacity, rais'd and refin'd notions, and little leſs than real enthuſiaſm; I mean, a truly divine *Impetus* or ardour impreſs'd or enkindled in the ſoul, by the exuberant influxes of the bleſſed Spirit. In a word,

word, he who in his retreat is entirely maſter of himſelf and time, had need have talents to employ and divert him, to find him buſineſs and pleaſure, and to enable him to reap benefit from the one, and to preſerve his innocence in the other: and without this degree of underſtanding, a ſolitary life muſt be very dull and barren nor can I think of any cure for this, but to increaſe a man's taſk and buſineſs in proportion to the defect of his underſtanding; that ſo employment may fill thoſe vacuities which contemplation never can. This puts me in mind to advance on to the third thing propoſed.

Sect. 3. The regulations of a *Contemplative Life*, which regards either, *Firſt*, the time; *Secondly*, the place; or, *Thirdly*, the exerciſe and employment of *Retirement*.

Firſt, As to time. Though *Contemplation*, more or leſs, ought to enter into every part of our lives; yet the moſt ſeaſonable time of giving ourſelves more entirely up to it, is the evening of life, the declenſion of our age: we have then had our fill of the world, and ſhall not be like to hanker after it; we have ſeen the emptineſs of it, and ſhall be more like to fix upon ſolid good; we ſhall value our peace and calm the more, after we have been long toſs'd by ſtorms: beſides, we ſhall ſet ourſelves more ſeriouſly to the meditation of death and judgment when we are come within ken of them, and ſhall be apt to examine the intrinſick good and evil of things with more impartiality, when the heats

heats of youth, and the boilings of our paſſions are cool'd and ſlacken'd: and finally, this is a ſeaſonable time to correct and repair the errors of the paſt life, and to ſtate our accompts for the laſt audit. But tho' I thus prefer age, as moſt fit for a retir'd life, I do not diſſuade the younger from it; provided it be virtue, not ſoftneſs; the love of another world, not cowardly declining the duties of this, which prompts them to it: otherwiſe it were, ſure, much better, that the younger ſort, through the vigorous ſeaſon of life, ſhould be engag'd and taken up by buſineſs; nay, ſhould contend even with the cares, troubles, and difficulties of the world, rather than make choice of retirement to be the ſcene of a voluptuous, lazy and unprofitable life: for in the one caſe ſomething is every day learnt, ſomething done; in the other nothing; in the one, the man lives neither diſhonourable to himſelf, nor unuſeful to his country; but in the other, he rots and conſumes away inglorioufly and unprofitably.

Secondly, as to place. Solitude has ever been deem'd a friend to meditation, and a retirement from the world very ſerviceable to a converſation with heaven: and this opinion is much ſtrengthen'd by the practice of the *Nazarites*, prophets, and devout perſons in the beſt times.

'Tis remarked of *Iſaac*, that when he would meditate, he went out into the field; and when *Moſes* met God, it was in the deſart. Without queſtion, a private retreat affords us many conveniences and advantages to a contemplative life; leiſure and ſilence ſettle and compoſe the thoughts;

thoughts; and the mind augments its ſtrength and vigour by reſt, complacency, and collection within itſelf: and in this ſtate of ſerenity it is moſt fit to reflect upon itſelf, or enter into a ſurvey of the reſt and peace of glorified ſpirits, and examine the grounds of its own hopes: by retirement we at leaſt, in a great meaſure, free and diſengage ourſelves from thoſe things which are apt either to ſoften, or diſturb us, and to breed in us either vanity or vexation. And I cannot tell, but the fineneſs of the air, the openneſs of proſpect, and regularity and moderation of diet, reſt, and exerciſe, may have that influence upon our bodies, as to diſpoſe and prepare them to be the fitter inſtruments of the mind. To all this we may add, That the variety, beauty, and uſe of all the works of nature, do inſenſibly, and almoſt unawares, raiſe in us an admiration of the divine wiſdom, and invite us to adore his power and goodneſs. But, all this notwithſtanding, it muſt be ever remembered, that retirement does not ſo much conſiſt in ſolitude of place, as in freedom from ſecular buſineſs and troubles; from the allurements, diſtractions and vexations of the world: If we put theſe off, we may find retirement enough in the moſt populous city; but if we carry theſe with us into the country, we ſhall reap little benefit from change of place or air; and under the name of retirement, we ſhall be perſecuted with all the evils and miſchiefs with which vanity, diſorder, and diſtraction are want to diſquiet an active and buſy life.

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This being rightly underſtood, the nature of our circumſtances ought to govern us in chuſing the place of our retreat; but eſpecially a regard to ſuch duties, wherein we propoſe to ſpend the bigger portion of our time.

Thirdly, The exerciſe and employment of a contemplative life is now to be conſidered: and here theſe ſeveral things offer themſelves immediately to my thoughts; *Buſineſs*, *Diverſion*, *Friendſhip*, *Meditation*; as compriſing all the ſeveral acts of a contemplative life, and meaſuring out the ſeveral periods of the Aſcetick's time.

Firſt, Of *Buſineſs*. I have before ſaid, That a life of mere contemplation is above the nature and ſtate of man; and when I conſider how few are capable of any long or regular contemplations, I am apt to think, that the wiſeſt way for moſt is, not to diſcharge and free themſelves from all temporal engagements, but only from ſuch as will diſturb the peace and order of a retir'd life; and yet I could wiſh, that their growth and improvement in knowledge and goodneſs might be their main buſineſs and employment. So many indeed are our errors and ſins, ſo frail, tender, and weak our virtue, that to correct the one, and confirm the other, is buſineſs enough, and may of itſelf eaſily take up the whole of life: if we purſue diligently all the methods of the improvement and advancement of life, we ſhall need no other arts or employments to ſpend or divert our time; he that, beſides a conſtant attendance upon publick devotion, ſacraments and ſermons, beſtows ſome time each day on bewailing his ſins,

ſins, and bleſſing God for his mercies; on examining his preſent ſtate, and eſtabliſhing his future hopes: he that ſpends each day but a few thoughts on God and Jeſus Chriſt his Redeemer, on the vanity and uncertainty of all things in this world, but religion and virtue; or finally on death and judgment; and withal on the various arts by which ſin and folly is wont to cheat and ſurprize him, to tempt or deceive him; will, I believe, find but few hours to waſte; eſpecially when 'tis conſider'd, how much time the neceſſities of nature, and the indiſpenſible duties we owe to ſome relatives or other, take up. And this calls to my mind the vigilance and induſtry we owe to the happineſs of others, as well as to our own: there are a great many offices of charity, to which humanity and our chriſtian profeſſion (if we underſtand the nature of church-memberſhip) do oblige us; the peace of the neighbourhood, the preſervation of laws, the promoting publick piety, the inſtruction of the ignorant, the relief of the needy, the comfort of the afflicted, the protection of the injur'd: Theſe, and ſuch like occaſions, will never be wanting to rouze our zeal and employ our charity; and theſe are works which will turn to as good, if not a better account in the life to come, than ſolitary virtue: and certainly they turn to excellent account in this: for when the retir'd man doth cultivate the neighbourhood, and ſow it with his charity, he ſeems but to plant and water his own garden, or plow and ſow his own fields; and while he renders them more

rich, gay, and fertile, himſelf reaps the pleaſure and the profit, enjoys the proſpect, and feaſts on the fruit. Juſt ſo it is in this piece of ſpiritual huſbandry; he who imparts wiſdom and inſtruction to another, purifies and exalts his own mind; he that ſcatters the expreſſions of his bounty and charity, feels his ſoul warm and delighted, and finds his virtue and his joy enlarged: for 'tis with grace as 'tis with nature, the exerciſe of each breeds both ſtrength and pleaſure: To all which you may add, that no man conſults more effectually the intereſt and the pleaſure of his retirement, than he who moſt zealouſly ſtudies the ſupport and improvement of his neighbourhood. Here's buſineſs enough, and I could point out to you more.

But why ſhould I take pains to contrive and cut out work for the contemplative man? peradventure I ſhould do him more ſervice, could I teach him an art to decline it. Alas! buſineſs will hunt and follow us, it will intrude and preſs upon us, whether we will or no: And ſuch is the natural vanity, ſuch the curioſity of our minds, that we are too often apt to make ourſelves work, and to entangle ourſelves in a thouſand trifles and impertinences. I doubt therefore, that it is here very needful to put thoſe I am diſcourſing to in mind to take care, that whilſt they ſhun the trouble and buſineſs of the world, they ſuffer not themſelves to be entangled in impertinences of their own creating; that they mind and purſue the main end, that is, growth and increaſe in virtue, and be at all times ready to ſacrifice trifles and matters of

of leſs moment to this their great intereſt; leſt fancy and humour, or ſomething worſe, uſurp the place of reaſon, as it does too often happen in a life of abſolute and uncontroulable liberty.

Secondly, Diverſion. This is not to be excluded from a ſolitary life; they adulterate religion, who make it ſour or melancholy; it condemns nothing, but what infects the purity, or breaks the force and vigour of the mind. We are not immortal and incorruptible beings; the ſoul and body both (for it were vain to contradict univerſal experience) ſink under the weight of conſtant labour: It will be hard, if not impoſſible, to preſerve the vigour of the mind, if we deſtroy the health of the body. God in another world deſigns us ſpiritual bodies, as the moſt proper inſtruments of theſe active minds; let us not therefore make them here crazy and ſickly. I would never have my religion be the effect of a broken body, but an enlighten'd mind: I would never have it proceed from diſcontent conceiv'd againſt this world; but from the firm belief, love and admiration of a better: whatever therefore diverſion recreates my mind without enſnaring it; whatever repairs my body without impairing my virtue, I embrace with open arms: I'll not only taſte, but drink my fill of pleaſure, if it exalt, not debaſe my nature; I ſhall never complain that my mind is too chearful, or my body too vigorous. Let the prieſt of *Baal* cut themſelves with knives and lancets; I'll keep my blood and ſpirits, if I can, to ſupport my zeal,

and enrich my fancy; and, in one word, to ſerve God with life. No body can here miſtake me, unleſs they do it wilfully; and therefore 'tis not worth the while to anticipate any wild objections: I patronize not the luſt, but the vigour of the body; I invite not to the ſenſuality of a polluted fancy, but to the virtuous recreation of the mind; and while I think not a dejected and diſcontented mind, and a decay'd body, the moſt acceptable ſacrifice to God, I do by no means deny a penitent contrite ſpirit, a purified and obſequious body to be ſo.

Thirdly, As to *Friendſhip*. The diſtinction between acquaintance and friends, is ever good, but never more proper or neceſſary than here: for retirement, as it ſignifies ſequeſtring ourſelves from company, is to be underſtood with diſcretion; and the plain rule here, as in all other caſes, is to avoid extremes; as a croud, ſo ſolitarineſs, ſeems not to miniſter either to the virtue or improvement of the mind, or to the peace and calm of life; the one robs us of our time, the other leaves us ſo much, that to very many it becomes burdenſome: The one makes us vain, trifling, or, it may be, worſe, ſenſual; the other dull and ſlow, or, it may be, moroſe and ſavage. The ſkill of a contemplative man is, not to decline all company, but provide himſelf of good. The prophets themſelves had their collegues! and they in the firſt times, who left the cities for the deſart, did yet aſſociate themſelves with one another. Indeed, as I take it, in this kind of life we have the fulleſt enjoyment, and the

the beſt ſervice of our friends; the pureſt delight, and the trueſt edification, being beſt promoted in the contemplative life by friendſhip: and therefore friendſhip is no more to be baniſhed from the gardens and retirements of the contemplative, than from the tables and enjoyments of the active.

Fourthly, *Devotion*. Participation of the Lord's Supper, and meditation, are the remaining part of the aſcetick life; and indeed, theſe ought to be his great employment. A life in the world may be a life of buſineſs; but a retir'd one ought to be a life of prayer, euchariſt and meditation: nor indeed can it well be otherwiſe unleſs we have propos'd to ourſelves ſome falſe ends of retirement: for theſe are not only the duties, but the pleaſures of the aſcetick life: in theſe the ſoul is enlighten'd, enlarg'd, rais'd, raviſh'd; in theſe it ſoars up to heaven, and looks down upon earth; in theſe it poſſeſſes ſtability and ſecurity, peace and reſt, in the midſt of a frail unſtable nature, and a reſtleſs and tumultuous world; in theſe all the paſſions of the ſoul are exerciſed with a moſt tender, ſenſible delight, ſorrow, fear or reverence: hate and indignation do here expreſs themſelves to the height, not only without any diſorder or torture, but alſo with great contentment and ſatisfaction of our nature; love, hope, joy, reign here without either check or ſatiety. But I forget, that theſe ſubjects are ſo rich and inexhauſtible, they would engage me endleſly: I forget, that they have been treated of ſo often and ſo excellently: I will therefore contract my

that his mind is apt to be exalted, and, as it were, purified by them, I know not why notional and thin, or myſterious and deep ſpeculations, ſhould be forbidden him; only in theſe, and ſuch like inſtances, two errors are to be avoided: *Firſt*, that we do not ſtudy more for delight and entertainment, than for edification in faith and virtue. *Secondly*, that we do not obtrude our fancies as oracles, our dreams as articles of faith, upon the world. If I cannot indulge or abound in both, give me the luxury of love, rather than that of fancy, and let me excel in humility and modeſty, rather than knowledge and notion.

St. *Peter*, in thoſe few words, 1 *Epiſt.* ii. 2. *As new born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*, ſeems to have excellently ſumm'd up the whole doctrine of contemplation, compriſing at once the matter, deſign, and end of it, together with the frame and diſpoſition of mind, qualifying us for it.

Writing may ſerve to marſhal and preſerve our thoughts, and by this means we may be ſtock'd with notions which may always be ready matter and argument for us to expatiate on; but we ought to take care, that firſt or laſt we be moved or affected by what we write; or elſe this will be rather an exerciſe of our invention than devotion: and all the products of it will be rather eſſays of wit and fancy, than of holy meditation; and we ſhall be rather apt to be pleaſed with our parts, than improv'd by this practice.

They, who are unable to ſtart proper matter for contemplation, or to carry it on regularly

and coherently, and by conſequence can reap little fruit by this kind of exerciſe, may ſupply theſe defects by reading, and ſuch reflections and applications of it, as are moſt eaſily and obviouſly made. For example; *Mat.* v. *And ſeeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was ſet, his diſciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, ſaying.* O bleſſed Jeſus! thou, the true doctor and teacher, whoſe words are life and light, ſpirit and truth, I will leave the multitude, I quit the world, and in the quality of a diſciple, I approach near thee: O do thou open thy mouth, and ſpeak to me; I deſire not to hear the voice of the world, or of the fleſh, or of the devil! ſpeak *thou* only to me, ſpeak *thou* to my heart, and to my conſcience, and let me hear and feel that voice that ſpeaks purity to the leprous, and life to the dead. *Bleſſed is the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* The kingdom of heaven, this is a bleſſedneſs indeed! The kingdoms of the earth dazzle and aſtoniſh me; my fancy cannot comprehend, my ambition cannot aſpire after their grandeur and glory. Ah! what then muſt the kingdom of heaven be! But, O my Lord, am I of the number of theſe poor! If I be not, make me ſo: Let me be never ſo contemptible to the world, ſo I be approved and acceptable to thee; let me have no ambitious thoughts, but for thy favour, and for the crown of righteouſneſs; let me covet no riches, no honour, no power here; if thy kingdom be but mine, in reverſion, it is abuntantly enough! Thus without ſtraining or pumping perſons

ſons of the loweſt talents, if they have any tincture of religion in them, may be eaſily ſupply'd with variety of arguments, and with moſt paſſionate and piercing thoughts.

O bleſſed! O voluptuous life! wherein, ſequeſter'd from the world, I enjoy all that it has in it of pure, of true or natural. Ah! that I could once break looſe from thoſe troubles and obligations that hang upon me, and enter into thy peace and tranquillity! I would plunge myſelf into all thy rational delights; I would loſe myſelf to this contemptible world; and forgetting thoſe ſhadows and appearances, and, at beſt, but faint and weak reflections of good, which flutter here about me; I would abandon myſelf intire to the joys of the Spirit, and the elevations of contemplation: let others enjoy honour, and wealth, and power; let me enjoy myſelf, truth, and God: let others enjoy the flatteries of ſenſe, and the cheats of fancy; give me the health of a ſprightly mind, the calm and ſerenity of a ſilent retreat, with the pleaſure and ſecurity which the divine preſence breeds in it: let others, finally, depend on fortune; me only on myſelf.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of the right husbanding and prolonging of life.

HAving in these two former sections, first, prov'd life to be in its own nature a solid good, a considerable blessing of heaven; and next endeavour'd to prevent the abuses and mischiefs to which it is liable, by stating the true notion of life, and by prescribing rules for the right conduct of the *acting*, *trading*, and *contemplative life*: The next thing that naturally falls under consideration, is, the shortness and uncertainty of this blessing. This is that that puzzles the wit, and baffles the courage of man; the rock against which all the attempts of human philosophy have dash'd and split themselves: for, to say truth, whatever complaints men make against the troubles, yet have they ever made more and sharper, against the shortness and uncertainty of life.

'Tis true, no cure has ever yet been found of our mortality: yet, as wise men have ever thought it reasonable to make the most of an enjoyment, tho' it wou'd not come up to all that they could wish or fancy; so, were there no other life, it would behove us to do with this, to nourish and keep in the flame as long as we can, though we know it must go out at last.

Now life, like enjoyment, is capable of accession or increase two ways; that is, either in

in its continuance, or perfection; either by lengthening its duration, or by raising, improving, or, as it were, ripening the joys and fruits of life, or life itself. I will speak first of *prolonging life:* and here I will, *First*, demonstrate, that *life* may be prolong'd. *Secondly*, I will treat of the ways of prolonging it.

But before I do either, it may be no very wide digression from my purpose, to take notice of the little artifices and impostures, by which many endeavour te evade the strokes of time, and flatter themselves with a sort of imaginary immortality.

CHAP. I.

The usual arts of preventing or retarding the decays of nature, and lessening the fears of death, exploded, and better substituted in their room. Physick, instead of which, courage and contempt of death. Paint, &c. instead of which, the beauties of the mind. Children, instead of which, good works, and so forth. Surviving honour not wholly rejected, but a true immortality preferr'd.

SOme take sanctuary in physick; for which they expect, at least, the preservation of the health and vigour of nature, if not the lengthening the date of life. I'll not dispute whether this art has deserv'd so well of mankind

as

as to juſtify the *Gentiles* in enrolling the firſt authors of it amongſt the gods, or ſome Chriſtians in attributing its original to guardian-angels. I'll not examine the poſſibility of that *elixir* by which *Arteſius* is reported by the *adepts* to have liv'd a thouſand years; nor, what is more to the purpoſe, who have liv'd longeſt, whether they who have made moſt, or they who have made leaſt uſe of phyſick: or however theſe queſtions be reſolv'd, I am ſure our time is better ſpent in labouring to contemn, than to prevent death; and that thoſe excellent principles which fortify the mind, contribute more to the comfort and pleaſure of human life, than the moſt ſovereign cordials that fortify the ſpirits.

Some being willing to conceal thoſe decays which they could not prevent, and cannot remedy, have deviſed many ways to counterfeit and ſupply that youth and beauty which time and various accidents have waſh'd and worn away. But, alas! to what purpoſe is it to deck and varniſh wither'd nature, and paint the ſpring upon the face of winter? To what purpoſe is it, when the evil is incurable, to ſuffer one's ſelf to be flatter'd and impos'd upon; and try in vain to hide a broken fortune, not only from the world, but from one's ſelf: alas! we muſt feel what we will not ſee; nature droops and decays as faſt within, as it doth without; and we loſe the life and briſkneſs of our blood, as faſt as we do the elegance of feature, or the floridneſs of complexion. In a word, as to this periſhing body, phyſick, waſhes, and fucus's are in vain; you but paint and patch a ruinous

ruinous fabrick, which can never be made ſtrong and beautiful till death hath taken it quite down to the ground, and a reſurrection build it up quite anew. If therefore you would take my advice, you ſhould lay in a ſtock of ſprightly generous pleaſures, which may be ever ready at hand to entertain you, when youth and ſtrength are paſt; you ſhould take pains to enrich and adorn the mind, whoſe beauties will more than ſupply the loſs of thoſe of the body; wiſdom, magnanimity, bounty, modeſty, ſweetneſs, humility, are charms able to recommend a deformed, or a decrepit body; and, I am confident, may be purchas'd at a much cheaper rate, than falſe or counterfeit beauties are by thoſe who are ſolicitous about them: let then the morning and noon of your life be ſpent in acquiring virtue, honour, knowledge, and good humour; and in your evening you'll have no reaſon to complain of the loſs of youth and beauty; theſe will be ſolid riches, and moſt amiable charms, that will provide you both delight and ſupport at home, and command both love and reverence abroad; and time will do you no other injury than it does a tree, when it changes its bloſſom into fruit: or than it does ſtatues, medals and pictures, whoſe price and value is enhanced by their antiquity.

Convinced that the decays of nature cannot be long conceal'd or propt up, ſome pleaſe themſelves with an opinion of ſurviving in their poſterity; as if man by generation did but multiply himſelf; and life did not, like a flame, end with its fuel, but were conveyed and tranſmitted

mitted from father to ſon, grandchild, and ſo on; like a ſtream that's ſtill the ſame, though it paſſed through numerous pipes. Well, for my part, I cannot fool myſelf with a vain gingle of words; I cannot flatter myſelf that I ſhall live in him, who probably will in a little time forget me, however he owe his being and fortune to me; nay, it may be, proud and ungrateful, will wiſh that others forgot me too; like a ſtream running, as ſoon as it enlarges itſelf, as far as it can from its little fountain; and labouring as it were by its circlings and wandrings, to conceal the meanneſs of its riſe: I cannot flatter myſelf that I can live in them, whoſe hopes and fears, deſires and joys, will differ, it may be, no leſs from mine, whatever they now be, than the dead do from the living. Fools that we are, to talk ſo wildly, as if when dead, we liv'd in our children; do we, when living, ſhare in their diſtant joys? or do our pulſes beat by their paſſions? I would not be miſtaken, as if I deſign'd to oppoſe or extinguiſh nature: I know the great Author of it, for wiſe and excellent purpoſes, has implanted in us kind inclinations towards poſterity; but then theſe are for the ſake of others, not myſelf; they ripen into actions that ſerve the turn of others, not my own: I only bear the fruit which others muſt gather. And whatever pleaſure I may now feel in a promiſing proſpect of the honour and virtue of my poſterity, 'tis ſuch a one as that of *Moſes* beholding *Canaan* at a diſtance; but ſuch a diſtance, that he muſt never enter into it.

To

To conclude; whatever men promiſe themſelves, I think them tolerably fortunate, if, inſtead of reaping any benefit, when dead, from their children, their lives be not ſtain'd and diſturb'd by them; extremely fortunate, if they can make them fit to be their friends and favourites, worthy to ſhare their pleaſures, and able to give them ſome eaſe in their troubles: tho', after all, I cannot but think, 'tis infinitely more eligible, to be the father of many good works, than many children; to have a philoſophical friend or two, than a numerous offspring; and to ſpend my time nobly in cultivating my mind, than entangling my life with cares for thoſe who often will take none for themſelves.

Some have entertain'd vain projects of an imaginary immortality; an immortality, which they muſt owe neither to God nor nature, but to hiſtorians and poets, painters and ſtatuaries, and to the dying echoe's of a ſurviving memory; I mean, that which men ſeek in poſthumous fame, in pictures, and ſtatues, and tombs, and embalming carcaſſeſs: all theſe ſeem to carry in them ſome fading ſhadows of being an exiſtence. But ah! how imaginary a life is this; ſomething that does infinitely leſs reſemble life and being, than a dream does enjoyment? ah! vain ſupport of human frailty! ah! vain relief of death! if there be any thing in honour, if it be body or ſubſtance enough to be ſeen, or felt, or taſted; if it be reality enough to be any way enjoyed: let me poſſeſs it while I live; it comes too late, if it ſerves only to increaſe the pomps of my funeral,

neral, or to dreſs and ſet off my ſepulchre, or to ſilence the groans, or to wipe off the tears of my orphans, or my friends, though this be ſomething: I cannot feel any pleaſure in the foreſight of that glory, which, while I ſtrain to gaze upon at a diſtance, the fogs and miſts of death thicken the ſky: the voice that will ſpeak me great, will ſpeak me too gone and vaniſh'd; the ſtatues and marbles, which adorn my memory, will adorn my grave too; and, while they expreſs my image or my actions, will proclaim, that all that is now left of me, is rottenneſs and aſhes. All this I talk, abſtracting from the conſiderations of a future life: for how far the reputation I leave behind may concern my ſoul in its ſtate of ſeparation from the body; whether the echoe's of thoſe praiſes and honours beſtow'd upon my memory here, will reach and pleaſe mine ears in another world, I know not, nor do I much deſire to know; for, ſuppoſing ſuch a life, my ſoul muſt needs have nobler employment, and nobler pleaſure than this can ever give it. I muſt confeſs, if the reflection of my light, when I am ſet and gone, would be of any uſe to direct or inflame poſterity, I ſhould now take ſome pleaſure in that, which, 'tis hard to perſuade me I ſhould take any in hereafter: nor would it be a trifling ſatisfaction to me, while I liv'd, if I could believe, that my relations or my friends could receive any honour or patronage from me when dead: and ſince ſome ſort of character I muſt leave behind; ſince I muſt in this manner, amongſt ſome at leaſt, and for a

little time, ſurvive, I had much rather leave behind me perfume than ſtench; I had rather live in panegyrick and commendations, than in ſatires and invectives. But, after all, how lean and miſerable a comfort is this, that when I am dead, it will be ſaid, I once liv'd? and a promiſcuous croud will talk of me, and of my actions what they pleaſe; ſome things good, ſome things bad, ſome things true, ſome things falſe? and what is worſe yet, I muſt ſuffer all the revolutions of humours and parties in following ages: theſe muſt give my abilities and performances their character, and the prevailing faction muſt ſtamp what eſtimate they pleaſe upon my memory.

But by all this, I do not mean utterly to condemn the love of honour; nay, 'tis really to be cheriſh'd when it operates rightly, and ſpurs men on to generous and handſome actions. I love a charity that is univerſal and boundleſs, and extends itſelf to following ages: and certainly there is not a nobler charity, than to furniſh the world with an example that may adorn its own times, and enkindle the emulation of poſterity. Nay, farther, I am willing to believe that a gracious God will ſum up, amongſt the accounts of my life, the influence it has upon the world when I am dead; and to raiſe the eſtimate of my virtue, will conſider it, not ſimply in itſelf, but with all the happy effects which it may any way be the occaſion of in ſucceſſive ages. Let me then do good, and, if I can, great actions, upon any motive, provided it be juſt and allowable; ſince

ſince this will be the bleſſed fruit of it. But yet it ſhall be my buſineſs to make ſure of my own immortality; if that of my *name* will follow, let it: it ſhall be my buſineſs to gain the approbation of God and angels; and if the praiſes of this lower world join their harmony and conſent with that above, this cannot diſoblige me: I will with all my power make ſure of my ſalvation, and not deſpiſe fame: great and good men have ever felt ſome natural deſires of this ſort of immortality. Since then this ſeems to be an inclination of God's own planting, 'tis not to be extirpated, but rather carefully cheriſh'd and cultivated, and duly prun'd and regulated.

Having exploded thoſe miſtaken fancies, by which men ſupport themſelves againſt the ſhortneſs of life; I will now proceed to treat of the only two ways by which this evil may be in ſome meaſure remedy'd; that is, by prolonging the date, and by improving, and perfecting the nature and eſſence of life, ſo that a man may live much in a little time.

ſails; and yet, I think, I have ſaid nothing of them, but as they have a particular aſpect upon the ſubject of this chapter; and I cannot paſs over meditation, without making ſome few reflections upon it. I know 'tis a worn ſubject; and therefore, that I may the more eaſily find pardon, I'll take care that this ſuperfluous impertinence, if it be one, ſhall be a very ſhort one. I will therefore take the liberty to crowd my thoughts, without method, together; leſt order and connection ſhould take up more paper than the things themſelves. *A good beginning is more than half the work*, is a proverb no where truer than here: for meditation will be like to end very unprofitably, if we enter not upon it in a good diſpoſition and devout frame; and if we do, it ſeldom ſucceeds ill.

The ſoul therefore ought to be ſedate, calm, untouch'd by any worldly concern, pure, and unſully'd by any carnal image, fill'd with the deſire of ſpiritual influence, poſſeſs'd with the awe of the divine Majeſty.

Yet may ſudden and extraordinary acts of meditation be ingrafted upon the ſtock of our natural paſſions, however firſt rais'd: thus a troubled mind betaking itſelf to reflect upon the vanity of the world, or upon the errors of life and corruption of nature, may enlarge itſelf in a great many very fine, affecting and edifying thoughts, till the ſtorm diſſolve in a ſoft and fruitful ſhower. Thus the mind, a little gay with ſatisfaction and joy, will eaſily overflow into hallelujahs, if it enter into the meditation of the joys of heaven, the love and beauty of God, the triumphs of the reſurrection, &c.

In all meditation we ought to have more regard to edification, than learning; to charity, than knowledge; to devout paſſions, than fancy our curioſity.

Let none deſpiſe pious heats and tranſports, becauſe thoſe ſhort paſſions, often repeated, will grow into habitual holineſs and ſteady devotion.

Thoſe arguments, which we find moſt effectual to the repreſſing an inordinate affection, or to the cheriſhing a weak and pining virtue, are to be often ruminated; not only that they may be always ready, but alſo becauſe they are generally more ſucceſsful than others; which may yet be in themſelves of greater ſtrength and force: for ſins, like the ſlaves in *Juſtin*, are often more eaſily defeated by whips and ſcourges, than by ſwords.

The principles which do the great work of religion, are few, clear, and irreſiſtible; but a vaſt body of ſentences, notions, arguments, untried, undigeſted, are like the armour of *Saul* upon *David*, unmanageable and cumberſome.

Diſputable or intricate points do yield little or no nouriſhment: wit and fancy are alſo for ornament, not food.

Yet weak ſtomachs muſt be fed with eaſy and digeſtable diet; and this may be made too as pleaſant and inviting as it can. God in the works of nature has mingled beauty with uſe, pleaſure with profit; why ſhould we think this unlawful in the kingdom of grace? Variety alſo may be called in to prevent languor and drowſineſs; nay, if the genius of the man be ſuch,

fatal periods of human life in the ſchemes of heaven; yet ought its authority to be preſerv'd, as built upon plain texts and ſolid reaſons, and atteſted by the ſuffrages of the prudent and wiſe, and by the daily obſervation of the multitude. But the truth is, there is nothing objected here, but what is capable of a very eaſy anſwer: The ſcriptures, which ſpeak an appointed time for man upon earth, are not to be underſtood of any particular perſonal fate, but of a general law or rule of nature; not of the extent of every particular perſon's life, but of the duration of man in general, or of the mortality of our frame and conſtitution, and the ſhortneſs of man's reſidence here upon earth; and imply no more than that man, as well as others ſpecies of animals, and indeed of the vegetables (for ſo far *Job* extends the compariſon) hath his time appointed, the bounds of his life or abode here ſet him, beyond which he cannot paſs. *Pſal.* xc. 10. *The days of our age are threeſcore years and ten: and though men be ſo ſtrong that they come to fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength then but labour and ſorrow, ſo ſoon paſſeth it away, and we are gone.* As to aſtrological predictions, if the accompliſhment of any of them be atteſted by unqueſtionable authority, and they be not like the prophecies of poets, made or mended after the event; yet methinks, were not the minds of men very prone to ſuperſtition, a thouſand errors ſhould be ſufficient to diſcredit and diſparage one good gueſs; and no man of ſenſe ſhould have a value for a pretended ſcience, whoſe

whoſe grounds and principles are evidently uncertain and precarious; no man of any religion ſhould be fond of that, which, to ſay no worſe of it, ſeems to ſtand condemn'd by God in ſcripture: for tho' I muſt not diſſemble this truth, that the idolatry which was ever blended with it, ſeems eſpecially to have drawn drown a ſevere ſentence upon it; yet can it not be denied, but that *Iſaiah* xlvii. *Jeremiah* x. and other places of holy writ, ſeem to look upon it with no very favourable or benign aſpect.

As to the preſcience of God, I ſee not how the denial of a fatal period of human life clathes with this; on the quite contrary, he ſeems to me injuriouſly to limit and reſtrain the knowledge of God, who thinks he foreknows nothing, but becauſe he peremptorily pre-determin'd it. This, if we will ſpeak ſenſe, is to magnify his power, but to reduce and confine his knowledge, or at leaſtwiſe to depreſs and debaſe it: for thus it would not be a primary and eſſential perfection, but would reſult from, or depend upon an arbitrary will, and unguided power. For my part, I cannot think it neceſſary, if I could not reconcile God's foreknowledge with contingency in events, therefore, with the *Socinian*, to deny the one; or, with the *Fataliſt*, the other: 'tis enough to me that I learn from ſcripture, that is, from God, who cannot err, that preſcience belongs to the Creator, and contingency to the creature; the meaſure and bounds of theſe, if there be any, let who will ſeek it, 'tis not my buſineſs now.

But

But yet after all this, if any may will contend for ſuch a kind of fate as is not rigid and inflexible, but ſubmits to the interpoſal of the divine prerogative; and leaves ſufficient encouragement for the labour, virtue, and prayers of man, I oppoſe it not: nature has its laws; but ſuch as God, whenever he pleaſes, over-rules. The government of man is not without order and method; much leſs the government of God: We are born into the world with different conſtitutions; but yet the unhealthy one may be rectified and mended by virtue, the healthy corrupted by vice and irreligion. Such a ſort of fate or deſtiny as this that is flexible and accommodated to the intereſt of religion, in which the evil may be corrected, or the good perverted; ſuch a fate as this, tho' the word be improper, I readily admit; but no other. No other, I ſay, in the general: for as to thoſe particular exceptions and reſervations, which at any time God may, and often does make, from any general rule or law, for cauſes always weighty and important, and generally hidden and inſcrutable; theſe I meddle not with.

Having thus evinc'd, that the period of human life is not fatally fix'd; that no peremptory and unconditional decree, no inſuperable connection or concatenation of cauſes, does ſuperſede our vigilance and induſtry for the preſervation of this bleſſing: I will now proceed to the ſecond thing propos'd, and conſider which way the date of life may be lengthen'd.

Sect. 2.

Sect. 2. *Of the ways of prolonging life.*

'Tis obvious and manifeſt to every one, that life depends upon theſe three things; the chearfulneſs of the mind, the health of the body, and a favourable providence of God; by which, as none will deny, who admit of providence, we may at leaſt be protected from violence and unlucky accidents, ſuch as human prudence cannot foreſee. And to theſe three, may, for ought I know, be added, the good will of man, whoſe miniſtry and ſervice is very often of excellent uſe to us in this point.

Firſt, The firſt thing then I am now to enquire into, is briefly, what chearfulneſs of mind does contribute to the preſervation of life; and then more fully, how we may poſſeſs ourſelves of it.

'Tis true, the moroſe and ſour, the froward, the paſſionate and the ſullen, thoſe ſtains and blots of human nature, do often prolong their lives to a great age; as if nature were renewed and repaired by this kind of fermentation; or the blood and ſpirits kept ſweet, like water, by a perpetual agitation. But 'tis as true, that the looſe and debauch'd, the intemperate and incontinent, do ſometimes, tho' rarely, live long and deſcend into the grave, rather oppreſs'd by their years than their exceſſes: and if from ſuch extraordinary inſtances as theſe, we ſhall take the liberty to form rules of life, and to contradict known and received truth, we ſhall ever live at the mercy of fancy, and never find any

any ſure and firm footing to reſt upon. I will not therefore doubt, notwithſtanding theſe rare inſtances, but that the chearfulneſs of the mind has a very propitious, its diſcontent a very malign influence upon the life of man: the contentment of the mind preſerves the balſam of the blood, and the pleaſure of it enlarges the heart, raiſes the ſpirits, actuates and invigorates all our powers; ſo that when the mind ſhines ſerene and bright, it ſeems to impart a new warmth and new life to the body, a new ſpring and new verdure to this earth. On the contrary, a diſeas'd mind does, as it were, ſcatter its contagion through the body; diſcontent and melancholy, ſour the blood and clog the ſpirits; envy pines away, and paſſion frets and wears out our ſtrength and life. In few words, there is an intimate conjunction between the mind and body: and ſo cloſe is the dependance of the latter upon the former, that the face of inferior nature does evidently vary, wither our flouriſh, according to that variety of weather it makes in the ſky above it, as the mind ſmiles or lowrs upon it: and accordingly, if we appeal to experience and obſervation, I believe, we may ſafely pronounce, that generally, ſuch live longeſt, who either think very little, or whoſe thoughts are always calm and chearful; ſuch who are ſtupid, and have no paſſions; or are wiſe and good, and have none but ſuch as are regular and delightful: to this purpoſe, in part, is that of *Solomon*, *The ſpirit of man will ſuſtain his infirmity: but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?*

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All this, I think, is not conteſted; and all the difficulty lies in poſſeſſing ourſelves of this ſatisfaction and contentment of mind: men ſeek it in every thing; and even thoſe things that are diametrically oppoſite to one another, do each pretend to be infallible guides to it: atheiſm and religion, philoſophy and ignorance, worldly prudence or policy, and an affected contempt of it, which I know no name for, do all promiſe to teach us the art of ſatisfaction: but it will not be a very difficult taſk, when we have examined the pretences of each, which we are to follow.

Ignorance, luſt and fancy, are too blind, raſh and violent for us to abandon ourſelves to their conduct: nor are they more giddy and inconſtant in themſelves, than weak and ſubject to all the changes and odd accidents of the world: ſo that ſhould they lead us on to pleaſure, we have reaſon to apprehend pain the next moment; and at beſt they leave us not in a condition, either rationally to approve our enjoyments, or to fortify ourſelves againſt the loſs of them.

Worldly policy is built wholly upon miſtakes; it propoſes to us things under the notion of great and good; which, when we have examined, we find not worth our ſeeking; and of theſe, it can give us no aſſurance, whether we reſpect their acquiſition or poſſeſſion; and the ways it preſcribes to put us in poſſeſſion of all that ſatisfaction which reſults from theſe things have ſomething in them ſo mean, ſo laborious, ſo uncertain, ſo vexatious, that no ſucceſs can com-

compenſate that trouble and ſhame, which the canvaſſing for them puts us to.

Atheiſm pretends indeed to extinguiſh our guilt and fears; but it does alſo deface all the beauty and lovelineſs of human actions: it pretends indeed to let looſe the reins to pleaſure: but withal, it leaves us no ſupport under evil: it takes off indeed many reſtraints; but withal, it unchains and lets looſe our paſſions: in a word, it leaves us nothing truly great or lovely to enjoy in this world, or hope for in another; and if its tenets were uſeful to us, yet have they no certainty, no foundation: it derives all its credit from the confidence, not reaſon of men; who under colour of a free and impartial philoſophy, advance the intereſt of thoſe luſts to which they are intirely enſlav'd.

Religion then only remains to be follow'd: this rectifies our opinions and diſpels our errors, routs thoſe armies of imaginary evils which terrify and torment the world, much more than ſpirits and ghoſts do; this diſcovers to us objects worthy of all the love and admiration of our ſouls; this expiates our guilt, and extinguiſhes our fears; this ſhews us the happineſs of our preſent condition, and opens us a glorious proſpect of our future one; this diſcovers to us the happy tendency of temporal evils, and the glorious reward of them; and, in one word, teaches us both to enjoy and ſuffer; it moderates our deſires of things uncertain, and out of our power, and fixes them upon thoſe things for which we can be reſponſible; it raiſes the mind, clears the reaſon, and finally forms us into ſuch an united,

united, ſettled, and compacted ſtate of ſtrength, that neither the judgment is eaſily ſhaken, nor the affections hurry'd by any violent tranſport or emotion. But do I not here imitate phyſicians, who attend only to the moſt dangerous ſymptoms, and neglect others? Whether I do or no, they, who read ſuch diligent directions, are wont to do ſo in their application of them; and moſt are apt to look upon religion as deſign'd only to redreſs ſubſtantial and formidable evils. And yet 'tis with the mind as with the body; tho' fevers, impoſthumes, defluxions, *&c.* kill, the anger of a puſtule, the pain of a tooth, do ſtrangley diſorder and diſturb: and thus, tho' pain and death, and ſuch like evils, overthrow and overwhelm the mind; yet are there a croud of ſlight and trifling evils which diſquiet and diſcompoſe it: and this is a matter not to be condemn'd, eſpecially by me, in the proſecution of the deſign I am here upon; ſince I perſuade myſelf, that the great and formidable evils, guilt, pain, poverty, ſickneſs, death, or the thoughts and apprehenſions of them, do but very rarely afflict the life of man: but there are other evils of a ſlighter nature, which, like pirates, are perpetually cruiſing on our coaſts; and tho' they cannot invade and deſtroy, do much diſturb and annoy us. Nay, what is yet more, 'tis very uſual to ſee men acquit themſelves very honourably under true and ſubſtantial evils, who come off very poorly from the encounter of ſlight and deſpicable ones: how common is it for one who maintains bravely his courage and judgment amidſt ſwords and bullets, to loſe all patience, prudence and government, when attacked by a

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rude jeſt, a briſk, or, it may be, a bold and ſenſeleſs reflection? to ſee a man that bears very calmly the loſs of a ſhip, or a conſiderable ſum of money, tranſported into ſtrange indecency upon breaking of a glaſs, or the ſpoiling of a diſh of meat; and he who ſits very tamely and unconcernedly down under a diſgraceful character, ſweats and raves, if robb'd but of a cabbage or an apricock. Theſe, and ſuch like remarks, one may make every day, and almoſt in every company: and, what is the worſt of all, our fears and ſorrows, our hate and anger, are as violent and uneaſy, when they ſpring from cauſes of the leaſt, as of the higheſt moment. We bewail fantaſtick and true misfortunes with the ſame ſighs and tears; and reſent imaginary and ſubſtantial injuries with the ſame diſorder'd pulſe and deform'd looks. When I have reflected on all this, I have often thought that it was as neceſſary to the tranquillity of human life, to guard myſelf againſt duſt and flies, as againſt ſtorms and tempeſts; to arm myſelf againſt the ſtings of a ſwarm of vexatious accidents, as againſt peſtilence and war, and poverty and blindneſs, or deafneſs. And to this end, theſe three or four following rules have often been of great uſe to me. *Firſt*, Of the evils of life I never take more to my ſhare than are really my own. I never travel abroad to find out foreign miſchiefs to torment myſelf, as if there were not enough of the native growth of my country; my own mind, my own body, my own houſe, are provinces wide enough for me, and a little too fruitful too; nay,

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I am not aſham'd to confeſs, I decline, if I can, an evil, even lying in my way, as I do a buſtle or a fray, by paſſing on the other ſide of the ſtreet. I'll never ſplit upon a ſhelf or rock, if I have ſea-room enough. And as a little diſtance of place, ſo a little diſtance of time, ſerves my turn to make me reckon ſuch evils as none of mine: I'll no more diſtract or diſturb myſelf with the evils that are fancy'd teeming in the womb of time, than with thoſe that are now in being in *Peru* or *Mexico*. This is the very lecture religion reads me: for ſure, to incorporate diſtant evils, or to anticipate future ones, were far from *ſtudying to be quiet, and doing one's own buſineſs*; or from thinking, with our Saviour, *ſufficient for the day, is the evil thereof*; and were indeed to ſuffer as *buſy bodies, fearful and unbelievers*. If any man will impute this to me as brutality and uncharitableneſs, I cannot help it: I thank God, that I have ſenſe enough to practiſe caution without fear, care without anxiety, and charity without diſtreſs or agony of mind. *Secondly*, As to thoſe evils (I ſpeak ſtill of ſlight and daily ones) which do really fall to my ſhare, and I cannot avoid; my next care is to weaken their force, to diſarm them of their ſting, their teeth and venom, if they have any: I take from them all the terror that fancy and opinion have given them; and will no more, if I can help it, ſuffer my imagination, than my taſte or feeling, to be abus'd or impos'd upon. In the next place, I carefully fortify and ſtrengthen myſelf; ſee that my ſtate be healthy, and my nature

CHAP. II.

Of Lengthening Life.

Sect. 1. *The* Fatality *of the period of life refuted. And objections from ſcripture, from aſtrological predictions, from divine preſcience, anſwered. A ſort of fate admitted.* Sect. 2. *Of the ways of prolonging life.* Firſt, *Chearfulneſs of mind.* Secondly, *Health of body.* Thirdly, *The protection of God and man.* Sect. 3. *Objections againſt this laſt aſſertion, from ſuch texts as aſſert the promiſcuous events of things, and from the early death ſometimes of the righteous, anſwered.*

UNDER this article I deſign to proſecute theſe three things:

Firſt, To refute the opinion of a *fatal* period of human life. A fancy which has poſſeſs'd the multitude, and with which the minds, even of ſuch as would ſeem above it, are not ſeldom aſſaulted.

Secondly, I will conſider what ways the date of life may be lengthen'd.

Thirdly, I will remove thoſe objections with which t his advice is encounter'd, either from the promiſcuous events happening alike to good or bad; or from the early and immature death of ſome righteous perſons. To begin with the firſt of theſe.

Firſt,

First, It has been too generally taught and believ'd, that the date of human life cannot be protracted; that every particular man has a fix'd and immutable period decreed him, beyond which he cannot go. But this opinion directly defeats the force of all motives and arguments to virtue, deriv'd from temporal conſiderations; and undermines our dependance upon God, and ridicules our addreſſes to him, as far as they concern this life, and the things of it: and how plain a ſtep is this to the refutation and overthrow of *Judaiſm*, which was built upon temporal promiſes, and conſequently to the overthrow of Chriſtianity itſelf, the authority of the New Teſtament depending in ſo great a meaſure upon that of the Old, I'll leave every one to gueſs. And were there no other reaſons to reject this opinion, beſides theſe alone; theſe, I ſhould think, were abundantly ſufficient, ſince 'tis impoſſible that any thing ſhould be conſonant to truth, which is ſo repugnant to the intereſt and authority of religion; but there are ſo many more, that I muſt be forc'd to croud them together, that I may avoid tediouſneſs and reduncancy. This perſuaſion then is repugnant to all the inſtincts of our nature; to what purpoſe is the love of life implanted in us by our great Creator? Why is ſelf-preſervation the firſt dictate and law of nature, if all our care and diligence can contribute nothing towards it? Vain and impertinent is that law, whoſe obſervation can procure us no good, nor its violation any evil. This is a perſuaſion that flatly contradicts the experience and obſer-

vation of mankind in general: how can the period of life be fix'd and unalterable, which we ſee every day, either lengthen'd out by care and moderation, or ſhorten'd by exceſs and negligence; unleſs we can reſolve, to the utter overthrow of religion, not only that life and death, but alſo that vice and virtue, wiſdom and folly, which lead to the one and the other, are alike pre-determined, neceſſary and fatal? Nor is this opinion leſs contrary to the ſenſe and reaſon of the wiſe and prudent, than to the experience of the multitude; ſelf-preſervation is the firſt and chief end of civil ſocieties and human laws; but how foppiſh and ridiculous a thing were it for the grave and ſagacious part of mankind to enter into deep conſultation, to frame ſolemn laws, and deviſe the ſtrongeſt obligations to fence and ſecure that life which can neither be invaded one minute before its fatal hour, nor prolong'd one minute beyond it; nor has man only, but God himſelf, endeavoured to ſecure this temporal life by the ſtricteſt and moſt ſolemn laws; nor this only, but he has made life and death the reward of obedience, and puniſhment of ſin. This opinion therefore is a manifeſt calumny againſt the wiſdom and ſincerity of God; againſt his wiſdom, if he raiſe up the palliſado's and bulwarks of laws to guard and defend that life, which can neither be violated before, nor extended beyond its minute: his *ſincerity*; for his promiſes would be ludicrous and inſignificant; and ſo would his threats too, if neither the obedience of the virtuous could lengthen, nor the diſobedience

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of the ſinner could ſhorten life. And in a word, to what purpoſe does the Spirit in 1 *Pet.* iii. 10, 11. invite and encourage men to religion by the propoſal of life and proſperity, if in the bottom and truth, life and proſperity depend, not on our behaviour, but our fate; and be not diſpenſed according to the open propoſals, but the ſecret and unconditional, the rigid and inflexible decrees of the Almighty? I would not ſtop here, but heap together a multitude of other arguments againſt this error, did I not remark, that it has prevail'd too much to be deſpis'd, ſo has it too little to be laboriouſly refuted; and that it has ſo weak a foundation, that few of thoſe that defend it, do believe it; or at leaſtwiſe, ſo heartily, as to ſuffer it to have any influence upon their counſels or actions: *Turks*, aſtrologers, and the more ſuperſtitious aſſertors of fate, being no more free from the fears of death, or a concern for life, than the reſt of mortals.

The truth of this propoſition being thus made out by unanſwerable reaſons, we are not to ſuffer ourſelves to be moved by any ſuperſtitious imaginations, by any obſcure or ſubtil objections, or by any mere colours or appearances of reaſon: for what is once clear and evident, ought to remain firm and unſhaken, tho' we cannot unravel every objection againſt it. Therefore tho' I ſhould not be able to reconcile this doctrine with ſome obſcure texts of ſcripture, with a certainty of God's preſcience, and with ſome particular predictions of men, who have pretended to read the

tection, with faith or fervour, or as much as ſincerity; but if they ſignify any thing, then ſurely they muſt ſignify, that his providence is actually employed for the preſervation of virtuous men: and how great ſecurity is this? What can be impoſſible to him who is the Governor and Creator of the world, in whoſe diſpoſal all created *means* are, and in whoſe power it is, if theſe be unſufficient to create new ones? to him whoſe unerring laws can never miſs of thoſe ends he aims at? or if they could, his power is ever at hand to ſupply their defects, and accommodate and attemper them to particular emergencies; and his prerogative is under no ties, no limitations, but thoſe of his divine wiſdom: Well might the *Pſalmiſt* ſay, *I laid me down and ſlept, for 'tis thou, Lord, makeſt me dwell in ſafety.* Every good man might ſay the ſame as far as he has a divine warrant; not in peace and health only, but in ſickneſs, in a tempeſt whether by ſea or land; in a plague, in a battle, in a ſiege, in a ſtorm: to believe ourſelves under the patronage and protection of God, ſeems to me nothing leſs than to believe, that he will make thoſe things we are concern'd in, flow with a ſmooth and gentle ſtream; that he will place us in a ſtate or condition of life, ſafe and agreeable; or if not, that in diſtreſſes and dangers he will contrive the methods of our reſcue, and where the ordinary are inſufficient, find out extraordinary; that he will concur and co-operate with the natural courſe of things; or, if he ſee it fit, that he will exert a

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ſupernatural force, and vouchſafe an extraordinary ſuccour. Plainly thus, tho' I know not the unſearchable methods of divine providence, yet from God's concerning himſelf for my good, I may boldly infer, that in my ſickneſs I may hope for that from God, which I cannot from the ſkill of my phyſician; that in troubleſome times I may expect that from providence, which I cannot from the wiſdom, juſtice, or power of the magiſtrate; that in neceſſitous, involv'd and intricate circumſtances, I may promiſe myſelf that iſſue from his favour, which I cannot from the prudence and integrity, or bounty of my friends; and, in a word, that in all caſes I can hope for that from my prayers, which I otherwiſe could not from human power or policy. The ſum of all is; all the natural means of our ſecurity and life are in the hands of God; and if theſe ſhould be deficient, nothing can reſtrain him from exerting a ſupernatural force and virtue for our preſervation; his fix'd and univerſal laws are infinitely wiſe: but if at any time our affairs ſhould require his immediate interpoſal, I know not why I ſhould fancy his prerogative ſo bounded, that he cannot or will not interpoſe: and tho' his pavilion be thick clouds, and he walk upon the wings of the wind; tho' his providence be a great abyſs, and the ſwiftneſs and ſecrecy of his actings elude our ſearch, and baffle our inquiries, ſo that we cannot diſcern when he acts by prerogative, when by law; yet, I doubt not, but that he does frequently exert a miraculous and extraordinary power.

This being ſo, 'tis plain that our great buſineſs is to engage the providence of God on our behalf, that we may have an unerring guide of this dubious and floating life, a firm ſupport of this mortal corruptible nature; and, I think, I need not prove, that religion is the effectual way to oblige God. If this be the great meſſage that we have received of the Son of God, *that God is light*; then St. *John*'s inference muſt needs be good, that he who only walks in the light can maintain a communion with him, that is, be dear and acceptable to him; a ſpiritual and rational worſhip muſt be the only method to endear ourſelves to a God, who is a wiſe Spirit. Nay, tho' all the precepts of religion ſhould not be neceſſarily founded in their conſonancy and agreeableneſs to the divine nature; yet ſtill, ſince they are the precepts of God, we need ſearch for no other reaſon for the acceptable neſs of our obedience: 'tis true, all the heights of purity, to which the goſpel invites us, are not neceſſary to the health and ſtrength of the body; yet are they ſerviceable to the perfection and improvement of our nature: they are not all indiſpenſable to the happy conduct of our temporal affairs; but they are uſeful to the felicity and glory of our eternal; and therefore the more religious we are, the more we ſhall pleaſe God. But I will inſiſt no longer on ſo unconteſted a point; nature itſelf dictates, that an imitation of their virtues is the ſtrongeſt obligation we can lay upon the wiſe or good; and obedience the moſt effectual recommendation of us to the ſovereign powers:

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whether therefore we conſider God as the *beſt*, or the *greateſt*, the characters under which the light of nature did ever preſent him, religion, that is, imitation and obedience, are the only ways by which we may ever come to pretend to his favour.

Nor is virtue leſs apt to procure the favour and amity of man, than that of God; it fences us about with the arms and ſuccours of mankind, it guards us with all their eyes, and with all their prayers: for their love and reverence make them both active and wakeful in our ſervice.

How directly repugnant to all this are the effects of irreligion? it leaves us no other ſafeguard than that of our own ſtrength and vigilance; which to ſpeak properly, is to deliver us up into the hands of our folly and fear, our weakneſs and cowardice: for alas, what were my ſingle reaſon or force, when I have neither God nor man to ſecond me; how much leſs, when the indignation of the one, and the ſecret averſion or open enmity of the other, ſcare and intimidate me! how can a man hold out againſt dangers, if he be betrayed by his own guilt within; and his reaſon, overthrown by ominous fears, do not leſſen, but multiply his terrors: hence is that of *Solomon*, *The wicked flee when no man purſueth; but the righteous are as bold as a lion:* abandon'd by God and man, he ſeems at laſt abandon'd by himſelf too.

The ſum of what I have ſaid under this article, amounts to this; firſt, I have proved that the date of human life is not fatal and unalterable; from whence I thought it neceſſarily follow'd,

follow'd, that it was capable of being prolong'd or protracted: therefore I proceeded, ſecondly, to conſider by what means it might be prolong'd: and here ſuppoſing that nothing could be more conducive to this, than a *chearful mind, a healthful body, and a propitious providence*; I have made it evident, that theſe are to be ſought in the practice of religion and virtue; which is nothing elſe than what inſpired authors have frequently taught; *Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Thou ſhalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a ſhock of corn cometh in its ſeaſon.* A bleſſed and perfect religion! at once the guard and joy of life! at once the ſupport and delight of human nature!

Sect. 3. *Two objections againſt the deſign of the former paragraphs anſwer'd.*

But againſt this whole diſcourſe it will be objected, *firſt*, How is this that you contend for? how are thoſe texts which make length of days the reward of obedience to the divine laws, reconcileable with thoſe other, which, as far as concerns their temporal effects, ſeem to equal wiſdom and folly, and level righteouſneſs with wickedneſs, aſſerting the promiſcuouſneſs of all events to the virtuous and vicious? *All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not: as is the good, ſo is the ſinner; and he that ſweareth,*

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as he that feareth an oath, Eccleſ. ix. 2. And this is extended as far as death itſelf; *How dieth the wiſe man? as the fool*, Eccleſ. ii. 16. Innumerable are the anſwers to this objection; but one only fits my purpoſe, which is plainly this, that theſe are rhetorical exaggerations of human vanity: wiſe and good men, as well as others, have their natural paſſions; and therefore divine writings have their figures, as well as thoſe that are purely human: Theſe therefore, and the like ſpeeches, deſign not to derogate from the efficacy of virtue, or weaken the force of the divine promiſes, but to humble the vanity of man, and convert his fondneſs for this world, into a greater for a better; and are not therefore to be underſtood in ſuch a general and unlimited ſenſe, as if there were no difference between the righteous and the wicked, with reſpect to temporal good and evil, life and death; but only thus, that the righteous are not ſo univerſally exempt from temporal evils, but that ſome or other of them, in all ages, are liable to them, even to an untimely death itſelf: but what then? Such extraordinary inſtances of an indiſcrutable providence ought no more to derogate from the excellence of wiſdom and virtue, or the veracity of God, than ſome few ſhipwrecks ought to diſcredit navigation; or, the failing of ſome few traders, diſparage art and induſtry: 'tis enough that the experience'd and ſkilful, the careful and diligent, do generally ſail and trade ſucceſsfully. And this may in part ſuffice for an anſwer to another objection

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of the ſame nature with this; only that this relates to all events in general, but the objection following, to a particular one.

If long life be a great bleſſing at preſent, and recommends men to greater afterwards; and if religion and virtue be on both theſe accounts entitled to it, whence is it that an immature death ſnatches away ſometimes the beſt of men, that it ſtops them in the very progreſs of their virtue, and in a full career towards perfection and glory? I anſwer,

1. The providence of God is a great deep, *his judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out.*

Secondly, I cannot believe that this early death, which intercepts the fruits of a growing virtue, ſhall bereave the virtuous of any degree of that future glory to which ſuch fruits would have entitled them; I ſhould rather think, with the author of the book of *Wiſdom*, that having compleated their perfection in a little time, they had in a little time finiſhed their courſe; and by what they did do, gave ſuch plain proofs of what they would do, that God rewards their purpoſes as he does the actions of others, and therefore haſteneth to take them to himſelf. But however this matter be, I am content to believe,

Thirdly, That as God orders all the particular events of life to the good of thoſe that love him, ſo much more muſt he diſpoſe this biggeſt event that befals a mortal man, that is, death, to their intereſt and benefit; and therefore this immature death is doubtleſs, to the righteous,

righteous, better than life, tho' we ſhould not be able to diſcern why.

They die in their perfections, their glory yet unſullied, their felicity unſtained; no vile temptation, no misfortune having yet triumphed over them; an advantage which we much admire, when we ſee great and good men ſurpriſed or overpower'd by weakneſs and calamities: for then we cannot but acknowledge, that if death had come ſooner, it had been much kinder; for they had been gather'd into the ſtore-houſe of the dead, like corn into the granary, before unſeaſonable or immoderate rain had corrupted it, or any malignant vapours blaſted it.

Laſtly, I know not how heaven has dealt with theſe, its favourites; peradventure 'tis in the moral as in the political world; ſome are born to that greatneſs which others acquire with labour: he never dies too ſoon, who dies ripe and perfect: and if the divine ſouls came into the world enrich'd with more light and beauty, with more impetuous inclinations to virtue, than thoſe of other men; if their ſhort life were ſo innocent, ſo bright, that out of a particular grace God thought fit to exempt them from the miſeries of this life; or that upon the account of a particular pre-eminence, they needed not paſs through the trial, the diſcipline and purgations of it: On either of theſe ſuppoſals, we ought not to commiſerate, but revere their fate.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of improving life, or living much in a little time.

What is to be underſtood by improving or exalting life, and the advantage of this notion. Three ways of improving life. Sect. 1. *By perfecting nature. Man and life mean things, till wiſdom and virtue ſtamp a value on them. This particularly exemplified with* reſpect to knowledge, *and the due regulation of the* affections. Sect. 2. *By beginning to live betimes, or at leaſt imediately. No objection againſt becoming preſently wiſe and happy but the difficulty of becoming ſo. An exhortation, addreſſed, Firſt, to the young. Secondly, To thoſe advanced in years. Cloſed with a reflection on the day of judgment.* Sect. 3. *By avoiding all thoſe things that are injurious to life, as ſloth, impertinence, remiſneſs or coldneſs in religion: levity and inconſtancy. Some other directions deferr'd to the following treatiſes.*

TO underſtand aright what it is I here aim at, what I mean by the *improvement* or *exaltation of life*, 'tis neceſſary to call to mind the true notion of life, laid down in the beginning, That it is the right uſe of all our powers and faculties, the rational exerciſe, the wiſe employment of our whole nature. Now, if this be ſo,

ſo, 'tis plain that we live juſt as much as we act and enjoy, I mean, always rationally; that as we advance and grow up toward a perfection of nature, the more is life alſo raiſed and refined. Thus if the life of the underſtanding be to think, to diſcover and contemplate truth and goodneſs, then ſurely its life is enlarged with its knowledge: if the life of the ſoul of man, I mean his will and affections, be to chuſe and purſue, admire and love true good, then certainly our life is perfected with our virtue, and augmented with our religion. In a word, if the life of man do not conſiſt in the motion of animal ſpirits, but the exerciſe of his rational powers and faculties: if the true health of man be not to be judg'd by the regularity of his pulſe, but the harmony of his affections; if finally, the thing call'd *life*, be not to be meaſured by hours, and days, and months, and years, but by activity and enjoyment, by the rational acts of a rational nature; then ſurely I may boldly conclude, that the more regularly and conſtantly we purſue the proper buſineſs of our nature, the more actively and vigorouſly we are carry'd on towards that which is our proper good; ſo much the more we *live*, ſo much the more rich and racy, the more true, natural and pure is life: and all this is no other philoſophy, than what the wiſe man has long ago advanc'd: *for honourable age is not that which ſtandeth in length of time, nor that is meaſured by number of years. But wiſdom is the gray hair unto men, and unſpotted life is old age*, Wiſd. iv. 8, 9. This indeed is a truth of too vaſt an importance

firm; leſt I ſhould complain of the meat, when the fault is in my ſtomach; or think the bed ill made, when the cauſe of my uneaſineſs is in the body. And laſtly, when I have reduc'd the evil to its own natural ſize, generally 'tis of ſuch a Pigmy, dwarfiſh growth, that I can ſecurely ſlight it; I can maſter it with very little trouble and induſtry, or at worſt, with a very little patience; and, that I may not be wanting here, I look upon it as a taſk I am born to, as an inconvenience that I can no more ſhun, than any natural defects in my body or my mind; or that I can the cares and fatigues of my calling. *Thirdly*, I labour above all things to fill my ſoul with great and raviſhing pleaſures, to inflame it with a generous ambition, and, in a word, to poſſeſs it with that habitual poverty of ſpirit, meekneſs, purity, charity, commended to his diſciples by our Lord and Maſter; that I am generally above the buz and fluttering of theſe, rather impertinencies, than evils of human life; and do often ſuffer them without being ſenſible of them; but I can never often enough put the world in mind of the vaſt difference there is between the fits and habits of theſe virtues. What we could do in a pious humour, that we ſhould always do, were but the weak impreſſion once converted into nature, the ſhort-liv'd paſſion chang'd into ſteady habit: but 'tis high time to purſue my deſign; I am almoſt afraid, I dwell ſo long upon a head, that the moſt pertinent parts of my diſcourſe may now and then look like digreſſion. The next thing to be conſidered, after the *chearfulneſs of the mind, is*,

Secondly,

Secondly, The *health of the body*. Life does ſo apparently depend on this, that in the vulgar notion it ſignifies much the ſame thing. 'Tis notorious, life decays and expires with the health and ſtrength of the body; and when it is protracted after theſe are gone, it ſcarce deſerves the name of life, any more than the noiſe of an ill-ſtrung and an ill-tun'd inſtrument does that of muſick. But I need not teach any body the value of health, or preſs them to the preſervation of the body: I ſhould be ſufficiently obliged to the world, if I could teach it any art by which they might be reſtor'd to that bleſſing which it enjoy'd before the flood, a long life of many hundreds of years. But I know no art that can raiſe nature above its own laws, or retrieve its youth, if it be now in its decrepitude: One thing I know, that we too commonly debauch and corrupt nature firſt, and then load her with our reproaches and accuſations: We ſhould undoubtedly live much longer, and this life would be more healthy and verdant, that is, more vital than it is, did we but obſerve the dictates of religion, the laws of virtue, and not prefer before them thoſe of luſt and fancy. How much ſoever men complain of the ſhortneſs of life, 'tis little to be doubted, but that moſt men do notwithſtanding ſhorten it themſelves, by ſome crime or error or other. If we could conſult the ſickly, crazy part of mankind, I mean, ſuch as are ſo in the middle, or almoſt beginning of their years, and demand of them, what blaſted their beauty, and impair'd their ſtrength; what thus violated, and contaminated their na-

ture? we ſhould ſoon be reſolv'd to what original their diſeaſes were owing, if at leaſt their ſhame or bluſhes would give them leave to inform us: and if we ſhould endeavour to trace the deaths of moſt of thoſe who are gone hence before their time back, to their fir ſtcauſe, I do not think, but that our ſearch would ſoon end in ſome vice or folly or other: this man drank too much, the other too much indulg'd his appetite; one was devoted to his luſt, and another putrified in his ſloth: all of them, in our common phraſe, *did live too faſt*; but in truth, and propriety of ſpeech, *died too faſt*; for ſince life is nothing elſe but acting by reaſon, every deviation from it is an approach towards death. But to proceed: 'tis not unuſual to ſee pride kill one, paſſion another, avarice and ambition a third; while to gratify theſe affections, the body is either expos'd to dangers, or worn out by labour. Now, if we can generally find the cauſes of moſt early deaths in mens vices, when ſo little of other mens lives come to our knowledge; what think you, ſhould we not be able to diſcover, if we could enter into the retirements, and penetrate all the ſecrets of mankind? how many hidden paſſions do gnaw the heart? how many ſecret ſins do waſte and conſume the ſtrength? where not only concealment excludes the eye, but a ſhew of probity, nay, a real and eminent practice of ſome particular virtue, excludes even ſuſpicion and jealouſy? if then immorality do often contract the term of life, 'tis evident what is to be preſcribed for the prolonging it; religion

gion or virtue is the beſt phyſick; it has often mended an ill conſtitution, but never ſpoiled a good one. When did ever chaſtity impoveriſh the body, or deflour the face? when did ever temperance inflame the blood, or oppreſs the ſpirits? when did ever induſtry or vigilance ſour the humours, and enfeeble the nerves? no crudities, no plethories, no obſtructions, no acidities, no ſtagnations, extravaſations, and I know not what hard names and harder things, derive themſelves from virtue or religion. 'Tis true, a man may be righteous over much, he my entitle his folly, his melancholy, his particular fancy, or his particular complexion or conſtitution, to religion; and this may prove miſchievous to him, to his health, to his ſtrength; but then this is not the fault of religion, but the man; and, to ſpeak properly, this is not righteouſneſs nor religion, tho' it be called ſo; but 'tis fancy and folly, or an ill conſtitution diſguiſed under the garb and the mein of religion. Virtue then is the moſt probable way to a long life; or if not ſo, at leaſt, to a more comfortable and honourable death: for where an early death is the reſult of a providence not a crime, we muſt needs meet it with leſs amazement ourſelves, and our friends behold it with leſs regret and affliction.

Thirdly, The third way of prolonging life, is to engage the providence of God in its preſervation. If all the promiſes God has made the virtuous, of a long life, did really ſignify nothing, I cannot ſee how we could put up any requeſt to God, relating to temporal pro-

employ itſelf upon, or, at leaſt, nothing that gives it any ſolid ſatisfaction; but the mind, which is fill'd with the knowledge of excellent things, has a great variety of ſcenes to entertain it, and never wants ſome freſh occaſion of delight and wonder. But it will be ſaid, does not the fool behold the viſible world as well as the philoſopher? he does; but juſt as he reads a poem, without diſcovering the artfulneſs of its contrivance, the richneſs of the fancy, or variety of the incidents. The ſinner hears talk too of an inviſible world, of moral perfections here, and of divine joys hereafter; but he hears it, unmov'd, unaffected; which ſhews he has no lively notion, no diſtinct perception of any thing of this kind; the glaſs is dull'd and ſullied; beauty itſelf would loſe all charm, reflected thus. But human perfection conſiſts not in knowledge alone, but alſo in the purity of the heart, in the regulation of the affections, in love and true liberty; that is, the heart muſt be ſet upon objects worthy of it, and we muſt purſue our true good with vigour and conſtancy; and this is that which renders life truly delightful and uniform: without objects to engage our affections, we can ſcarcely be ſaid to live; we ſhall be becalm'd, and ſcarce be ſenſible of the breath we draw; and unleſs theſe objects be worthy and agreeable, all is but ſtorm and tempeſt, cheat and torment; and our faculties are not rationally employ'd, but abus'd, deluded, deprav'd, tortur'd. Could we but comprehend what all this did amount to; or at leaſt, could we feel and experience it, we ſhould ſoon diſcern

diſcern that the wiſe and good, and they only, did truly live: for theſe only know God and themſelves; theſe only admire, and love and rejoice, and ope rationally; and theſe only are not confined or limited in their knowledge or their affections; for the objects of both are infinite; their minds can never travel ſo far in the contemplation of God, and the moſt important truths, but that there is ſtill a new world to be further diſcover'd: nor can their admiration or love, their joy or hope, ſo enlarge themſelves, as ever to equal the objects of theſe paſſions, and reach the utmoſt that is in them. But 'tis probable, after all, the fool and ſinner will pretend to engroſs the goods of the earth; as if they alone were to poſſeſs and enjoy them; as if they were the heirs of this world, the righteous of the other; but this is a vain fancy, and has been often baffled. Who can haſten more to enjoy, than he that knows the true value and right uſe of all things? and who can enjoy more in any thing, than he who at once gratifies his reaſon and his appetite, and pleaſes his inclination, without forfeiting his true liberty? If to be fool'd and cheated, if to be enſnar'd and tormented by the things of this world, be a pleaſure, in this the Chriſtian muſt indeed give place to the Infidel, the righteous man to the ſinner.

The ſum then of this whole matter is, life in the fooliſh, mean, and vicious ſoul, ſeems like a little rill of water, confined within narrow and ſcanty bounds; or, like the light of a candle inclos'd within the narrow compaſs of a

dark lantern; but in the wise and understanding 'tis like a mighty stream which swells above its banks, and spreads itself over a vast plain; or like light unconfin'd, which diffuses and darts itself over all the face of nature. Ah! therefore, how much does it import me to fill my understanding with bright and lovely images, with pleasing and important notions, with all the truths that can serve either to delight or guide, to nourish and adorn, to support or fortify me in this world, or advance my title to the joys of another; how much does it import me, to fill my soul with love, love of all that's good or great; love of all that's pure and sacred; love of all that's beautiful or delightful? and, lastly, that my body may be a fit instrument of such a mind, it does not a little import me, that this be strong and healthy, vigorous and vivacious.

Sect. 2. The second way to improve life, is to begin to live betimes: or at least, if your years be far spent, to begin to live immediately, which is all we can do. Life, in my notion of it, dawns with our reason, and grows up to ripeness and perfection with the virtue, liberty, and tranquillity of the soul. To be wise, and to be religious, this is to live: for in this consists fruition and enjoyment; in this the health and vigour of our faculties; in this the harmony and beauty of the whole frame of our nature; and this, and no other, is a rational and agreeable exercise of all our powers and capacities. Whoever therefore will improve life, ought to begin next moment to assert

aſſert his liberty, and to give up himſelf to true philoſophy: 'tis ſtrange to ſee how men put off this, or attempt it only ſuperficially and by the bye; they prefer, I will not ſay, trades and huſbandry, and various ſorts of knowledge foreign and remote from the ſervice and conduct of human life, (ah! that time were but ſo well ſpent in general;) but they prefer, even dreſſing, painting, drinking, gaming, and all, not only the moſt filly and trifling, but the moſt vile and infamous ways of conſuming time, before true wiſdom and philoſophy: nay, amongſt thoſe that make profeſſion of wiſdom, and pretend to have dedicated themſelves to the doctrine of Jeſus, 'tis common to ſee great numbers hearing, talking, reading, diſputing, without ever making any uſe of thoſe truths they ſtudy and contend for, or feeling any warmth or influence of them; like thoſe wiſe ones in temporals, who are laying up proviſion and treaſure all their life long, which they will never uſe, never enjoy. Ah wretched conſumption of life! how ſoon will the laſt minute expire? and the unhappy man will not have liv'd one year, one month, one day, but will have waſted a precious treaſure of time, and he muſt go immediately and account for it. Well, let the world live after its own faſhion, I plainly ſee the point I am to make; no day, no hour ſhall paſs me unemplov'd; every moment, if I can, I will grow wiſer and better; 'tis not how long I laſt, but how much I live; I will *know*, I will *act*, I will *enjoy* to day, and then, I am ſure, I have liv'd a day: this moſt propoſe to do, ſome time or

other, but not to day: and why not to day? why not preſently? is there any evil in being immediately wiſe, immediately free, immediately rational, immediately happy? it cannot be, if the ſtate I am in, be really good; if the pleaſures I enjoy, be really ſuch as my reaſon can ſhare in, and my conſcience can approve: I then indeed live: There's no need of change and reformation, but continuance and perſeverance; but if they be not, why will I not exchange falſe for true, and irrational for rational pleaſures? if I am in the right, if my condition be truly good and ſafe, 'tis well; there's nothing further to be done, but to maintain my ground: but if I am in the wrong, if the foundation be unſound and rotten, and whilſt I dream not of it, my health and fortune, I mean, my imaginary happineſs, conſume inwardly, waſte and decay inſenſibly; why am I fond of the cheat? why am I unwilling to be undeceiv'd and diſabus'd? and why not preſently? the reaſon is plain; they acknowledge the repreſentation I have made to them of a virtuous and rational life, is very pleaſant and taking; but to be born into this new ſtate, to come forth into this moral light, is as troubleſome, as the infants being born into the natural. They love the eaſe and wealth of a proſperous trader, but not the hardſhips of his apprenticeſhip, the thrift and confinement of his beginnings; they love laurels and triumphal arches, the glory and the pleaſure of victory; but cannot endure the toils and hazards of war. Or plainly thus, they admire liberty of mind, ſerenity and rational

onal joy, but it will coſt them much labour and pains to purchaſe it. Thus the wretched man, fearing the regimen of phyſick, wears out a miſerable life in the pains of a diſeaſe; and one that has a cancer or gangreen, chuſes to waſte and rot in pain by piecemal, rather than undergo the ſhort pain of amputation or abſciſion. Nay, what is worſe than all this, men are fond of their diſeaſes; love the things that increaſe and nouriſh them, as the groſs and corpulent do, reſt, the lethargick ſleep, and hydropick drink.

This is the ſtate, the deplorable ſtate of the far greater part of mankind: a ſtate of diſeaſe and death, a ſtate of bondage and captivity, a ſtate of infatuation and inchantment; and I very much fear, that whatever motives can be extracted out of the ſubject I am now upon, will be too weak and feeble: for what can all the diſcourſes in the world about rational pleaſure and the ſatisfactions of a regular and virtuous life amount to, with men wholly given up to ſenſuality, and incapable of reliſhing any pure and ſacred delights? If I have ſucceeded ſo far, as to poſſeſs them with an opinion that a life of reaſon and religion, is a life of pleaſure, tho' they have not any true guſt, or clear and lively notion of this pleaſure, 'tis the utmoſt I can hope for: but to perſuade theſe men to embrace this life, there is need of all the arguments that either reaſon or religion can adminiſter; and theſe too, pointed with all the life and ſpirit, with all the edge and flame that wit or judgment can give them; a taſk too hard for me. O God! thou lover of mankind,

kind, that thou wouldſt aid me by thy Spirit, while I ſtrive to prevail with young and old, to ſeek thy glory and their own happineſs, to purſue virtue and true pleaſure. I will firſt addreſs myſelf to the young, and then to thoſe more advanc'd in years.

1. To the younger. You are now in your bloom: what glorious fruit may you bring forth, what honour may you do God! what ſervice may you render your relations and your country! and what joys and bleſſings may you not heap on yourſelves! time and tide ſeem to wait on you; even the providence and grace of God, with reverence be it ſaid, ſeem to attend and court you. But ah! remember, they will not do ſo for ever; theſe ſmiles and invitations of heaven and nature will not laſt continually; your infidelity or ingratiude, your folly and ſenſuality, will ſoon blaſt and wither all theſe fair hopes, turn all your pleaſures into gall and wormwood, and all your bleſſed advantages into the inſtruments of your ruin, and agravations of it too: grace will ſoon retire, nature degenerate, time grow old, the world deſpiſe you, the God of it frown upon, and conſcience, guilty conſcience, will be either ſtupify'd and benumb'd, or feſter and rage within you, and death will come, and then judgment: and how ſoon 'twill come, ah! who knows? ſudden and early deaths ought to convince you on what uncertain ground you ſtand; the ſcythe of death ſtays not always till the harveſt be ripe; but promiſcuouſly mows down the young and old. Ah! begin, begin then to live;

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ſeize upon pleaſure and happineſs, while they ſtand courting and inviting you; purſue virtue and glory immediately, while the difficulties are fewer, your ſtrengths and aids greater; your judgments being not yet corrupted by the maxims, or rather the fancies of the world; nor your wills yet diſabled and enſlaved by a cuſtom of ſin. Ah! venture not to devote your youth to vanity and folly, on preſumption of devoting your age to repentance and religion: for if this were a rational and juſt deſign in itſelf, yet it is to you a very unſafe and doubtful one: for which way can you inſure life, or on what ground can you confide on the morrow? *Boaſt not thyſelf of to morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth*, Prov. xxvii. 1.

I know what oppoſition will be raiſed againſt this kind of exhortation, and with what rude reflections they will be treated. *Come*, ſay they, *this is our ſpring, let us enjoy ourſelves whilſt we have time and vigour; religion looks too grave and formal for theſe years: we ſhall have time enough to be dull and melancholy: come on then, let us enjoy ourſelves, as becomes our youth: this is our portion, and our lot is this; and whatever they, who have now out-liv'd themſelves, whoſe blood is ſour, and ſpirits low, may gravely talk againſt theſe things; they too, when time was, admired what they now would have us deſpiſe as vanity; and committed themſelves what they now condemn in us.* In anſwer to this, let us paſs over the briſkneſs and the flouriſh, and examine the ſenſe and reaſon

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of this ſort of talk: the ſubſtance of it may be reduced to three heads.

Firſt, Youth is the ſeaſon of pleaſure, *i. e.* ſin and folly: inclination and opportunity conſpire to invite you to it; therefore you indulge it. What a ſtrange argument is this? is there any period of our life, from our cradle almoſt to our coffin, I mean, from the moment we arrive at the uſe of reaſon, to our grave, wherein ſome ſin or other is not in ſeaſon. May not manhood defend ambition, and old age covetouſneſs, by the ſame argument by which you do your ſinful pleaſures? if inclination to a folly would juſtify our commiſſion of it, in what part of life ſhould we begin to be wiſe and virtuous? 'Twill be hard to find the time wherein we ſhall have no inclination to any ſin or folly: or rather if this be ſo, who can be guilty: The adulterer will impute his uncleanneſs to the *impetus* of his luſt; the murderer his bloodſhed to the violence of his rage; *i. e.* each of them their ſins to the ſtrength of their inclinations: and if your argument be good, they will be innocent. But do not deceive yourſelves; then is your obedience, as moſt acceptable to God, ſo moſt indiſpenſible in itſelf, when you lie under temptations to ſin: and heaven is propos'd as a reward, not of following, but conquering your inclinations. The ſecond part of the objection is, that religion doth not look very graceful in young years. This I could never well underſtand: if you be ſo fooliſh, as to think religion conſiſts in ſour faces, or an affected moroſeneſs and ſullenneſs, or in ſtupidity and melancholy, I muſt confeſs you

you have little reaſon to be fond of it: for this becomes no age, and much leſs the more verdant one. But if by religion you underſtand devotion towards God, reverence towards your parents and ſuperiors, temperance and chaſtity in yourſelves, and ſuch like virtues; I muſt needs ſay, nothing can appear to me more great and lovely than religion in youth: what can better become thoſe who poſſeſs the gifts of nature in their perfection, than gratitude to the God of nature? what can be a greater glory to the young, than obedience to parents, and reverence to their elders and ſuperiors? what does more preſerve or better become ſtrength than ſobriety and temperance? what is a more charming or more laſting ornament to beauty, than modeſty and chaſtity? After all this, 'tis a vain thing to comfort yourſelves with ſaying, that the grave and wiſe, when they had the ſame inclinations you now have, did as you do, indulge and gratify them: for, *Firſt*, This is not generally true; and, *Secondly*, The leſs they did it, the more were they honoured and belov'd: But, *Thirdly*, If they did, 'tis certain, that they have bitterly condemn'd it, and repented of it. And is it not ſtrangely abſur'd, that you ſhould propoſe to yourſelves nothing in the lives of the wiſe and virtuous, but their frailties and errors, for your example: that you ſhould pitch upon that only for your imitation, which all the wiſe and good deteſt and bemoan, as their ſin and ſhame, and think it their higheſt wiſdom to do ſo?

To conclude this addreſs to the younger ſort; unleſs

to be a new one: for were it but once thoroughly imbib'd, it would relieve all the preſſures, and redreſs all the grievances of human life. We complain of life that it is dull and nauſeous; we impeach it of vanity and vexation, of ſhortneſs and uncertainty: how would this one notion, well purſued, ſoon ſilence all theſe complaints? he would never think life too ſhort, who were ripe for death: he would never complain that life were uncertain, who was always ready to die; he would not accuſe life of dulneſs and nauſeouſneſs, who was daily advancing his diſcovery of truth, and enlarging his poſſeſſion of good, nor would he ever charge it with vanity and vexation, were his actions ſtill wiſe and rational: for thus every act of life would be an act of fruition too, being both agreeable to nature, and attended by a delightful approbation and complacency of conſcience.

By this time 'tis plain what the deſign of this chapter is, namely, to compenſate the ſhortneſs, by the excellence of life; and redreſs the vanity and vexation of it by its perfection: a deſign, I confeſs, worthy of a more comprehenſive mind, and a more elevated fancy than mine; a deſign, demanding all the wiſdom and experience of an active, and all the thought and learning of a contemplative life; a deſign, in a word, that requires at once the prudence of old age, and the vigour of blooming years. That I am willing to contribute the little I can towards it, proceeds from a ſenſe of its being a duty I owe myſelf and mankind: let me not therefore be op-

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preſs'd by the grandeur of my ſubject, and the expectation of my reader: I promote the good of mankind in my way, and as I am able; it were a crime if I did not, and it will be injuſtice to expect more from me. Beſides, I purpoſe not here to lay out my whole ſtrength, tho' this be little; having deſtin'd an entire volume to *human perfection:* and therefore ſhall here diſcourſe but very briefly, and in very general terms, of the improvement of life.

All the advice I ſhall offer here, may be reduc'd to theſe three heads:

Firſt, That we endeavour to perfect and exalt our nature.

Secondly, That we begin to live betimes; or, if we cannot now do that, our years being far ſpent, that we begin to live immediately.

Thirdly, That we avoid all thoſe things that are enemies to our true life.

Sect. 1. We muſt endeavour to perfect and exalt our nature. The neceſſity of this will be very conſpicuous to any one who ſhall conſider that the perfection of our acts depends upon the perfection of our faculties and powers, juſt as the pleaſure of ſeeing does on the goodneſs of the eye, or that of hearing on the perfection of the ear; ſo much, and much more, does the beauty of human action, and the guſt of all our enjoyments depend upon the clearneſs of the judgment, the rectitude of the will, and the vigour of our paſſions. To render this argument

yet more viſible and palpable, let us conſider how mean a thing man were, and how contemptible life, without cultivation or improvment: the body is but a heap of duſt; ſomething there needs to ſtamp a value upon it; ſomething there muſt be to give ſweetneſs to the eye, charm to the tongue, and grace to motion: 'tis a mere machine, alike capable of being made the inſtrument of cruelty or mercy, of luſt or chaſtity, of avarice or charity; 'tis religion muſt purge and ſanctify it; 'tis wiſdom muſt conduct and guide it, and make it the happy inſtrument of great and glorious actions. The ſpirit within us is a volatile, mutable, unſteady thing, capable of all ſorts of impreſſions, ſuſpended, as it were, between heaven and earth, floating between the different ſhores of good and evil: knowledge and virtue form it into an angel; ſtamp a ſort of divinity upon it (for we are not born, but made, great;) 'tis wiſdom that imprints it with bright ideas, that impregnates it with noble paſſions, and determines its tendency towards its true good and ſupreme felicity: our converſation with the world is naturally nothing elſe but a dull intercourſe of forms, and ceremonies, and civilities, a nauſeous circulation of the ſame taſteleſs and ſuperficial entertainments, a tedious and repeated purſuit of vain miſtaken ends, and often baffled deſigns; 'tis virtue and knowledge that give guſt and reliſh to our enjoyments, and life and ſpirit to all our actions; that lead us on towards excellent ends, and inſpire us with immortal hopes: our fortune and condition in the world

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is naturally a fluctuating unſtable agitation, made up of a confus'd and motley variety of events; knowledge and virtue fix the floating iſland, and give light and beauty to the *Chaos*.

I can never carry this argument too far; and therefore I will yet a little more particularly conſider, what acceſſion or increaſe of *life* we derive from *perfecting* our natures. Does life conſiſt in the exerciſe of our faculties? true life then is the portion of the active and induſtrious; the dull and heavy motion of the ſluggard is but a faint imitation or reſemblance of it; 'tis a diſeaſed languiſhing thing, a compound or mixture wherein there ſeems to be more of death than life. Does life conſiſt in fruition? how dark and diſmal are thoſe of the wicked, compared to the calm and bright days of the good? for what can there be like enjoyment, to that man who dares make no reflections on the paſt, nor can entertain any juſt hopes of the future; and whoſe mind concurs not with his preſent paſſions, and refuſes to join in the ſenſeleſs deſigns he is upon? Does life, laſtly, conſiſt, as I have proved it does, in the knowledge of truth and love of goodneſs? how ſcanty, narrow and beggarly is the life of the fool and ſinner, compared to that of the wiſe and virtuous? *Tully* ſaid, *One virtuous day was to be preferred before a ſinful immortality.*

This is true in the preſent ſenſe and notion of life: error and ignorance are, as it were, a diſeaſe or ſtate of inſenſibleneſs and death to the underſtanding; the mind that is utterly ignorant of objects worthy of it, has nothing to

unleſs there be any who are poſſeſs'd with a ſpirit of infidelity, againſt which I will not now enter the liſts, all the pretences you can poſſibly form, for your deferring to devote yourſelves inſtantly to wiſdom and religion, are founded in two ſuppoſitions; of which the one is falſe, and the other abſurd. The falſe one is, that ſin is a ſtate of pleaſure, virtue, of trouble and uneaſineſs: the contrary of which, is, I think, ſufficiently demonſtrated through this whole treatiſe: and would you but be prevailed with to taſte the pleaſures of a ſincere virtue, your experience would ſoon confute this fancy. What madneſs then is it to be afraid of becoming happy too ſoon! Ah! how differently are we affected under the maladies of the mind and of the body! Did the lame or blind, the lepers, the lunatick, or demoniacks, ever intreat our Lord to defer their cure, and give them leave to enjoy their miſeries, diſeaſes, and devils, a little longer? The other ſuppoſition is abſurd; which is, that you will repent hereafter. Muſt you then repent hereafter? Muſt this be the fruit of all your ſinful pleaſures, guilt and remorſe, grief and fear, diſtreſs and agony of ſoul? do revelation and reaſon, death and judgment; do all your ſober and retir'd thoughts preach you this one leſſon, *repentance?* and yet can you reſolve to plunge yourſelves in that filthineſs which muſt be waſhed off with tears? can you reſolve to indulge thoſe cheating and deceitful luſts which will one day fill your ſoul with ſhame and ſorrow, with diſtraction, horror, and amazement? Ah infatuation! Ah bewitchery!

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that ever a rational creature ſhould live in ſuch an open defiance and hoſtility againſt his reaſon! and yet, if *repentance*, after many years, and innumerable ſins, would be more eaſy; if your ſins would be more eaſily conquer'd, or more eaſily aton'd; this frenzy would not want ſome little colour: but how contrary is this to truth? which puts me in mind of another ſort of readers, to whom I am now to apply myſelf, namely,

Secondly, To thoſe who are advanc'd in years. 'Tis obſerv'd of *Cæſar*, by *Suetonius*, that lighting upon the ſtatue of *Alexander the Great* in the temple of *Hercules* at *Gades*, and reflecting on himſelf, that he had yet done nothing remarkable at thoſe years, wherein that (in *Cæſar*'s notion of gallantry) brave and gallant man had over-run all the *eaſt*, he did ſweat and bluſh under the keen reproaches of his own mind, and groan'd under the uneaſy *conſcience* of his ſloth, and preſently deſired to be diſmiſs'd from his queſtorſhip, that he might purſue glory and immortality, fame and dominion. Had you but one ſpark, I will not ſay, of the zeal of a Chriſtian, but of this generoſity of a pagan, you would bluſh at the ſoul, to think that you have not yet buckled on the armour of light, at an age in which many others have been cover'd with laurels; that you have not yet ſtarted forth at thoſe years, in which ſome others have finiſh'd, tho' not their race, yet all the difficulties of it: the miſerable account that you will give of thirty, forty, peradventure of fifty years! I will not ſay, that you have liv'd to no purpoſe,

poſe, but to the worſt imaginable: ignorant, enſlav'd to luſt, oppreſs'd by guilt! all that you have done, is, *You have treaſured up wrath againſt the day of wrath:* for this to be the product of ſo many years! ſhame and confuſion! but greater, infinitely greater, to go on thus. Sin may to ſome ſeem the misfortune of youth; but 'tis unqueſtionably the reproach of age: unhappy nature, and unhappy education bear a ſhare of the imputation in youth; but in theſe years, your own obſtinacy and choice engroſs the whole guilt. Young people are like weak barks, which in boiſterous ſeas and winds, carry too much ſail, and too little balaſt; their judgment is weak and unreſolv'd, and their paſſions light and violent as hurricanes; but riper years do, or ſhould, bring on naturally wiſer and ſtancher thoughts, cooler, ſedater tempers: and therefore certainly ſin in theſe carries a deeper guilt and ſhame in it; the raw, unexperienc'd ſinner periſheth whilſt he but taſtes and gazes; the virgin-ſoul coming into a ſtrange world, is deflour'd whilſt it gratifies its curioſity and fancy; like *Dinah*, when ſhe went forth only to ſee the daughters of the land: but the full-grown ſinner ſins againſt, not only the preacher's inſtruction, but his own experience too; he repeats thoſe ſins which he has often confeſs'd to be his folly and ſhame; and returns, like fooliſh mariners, to thoſe treacherous ſeas where they were ſhipwreck'd but the other day. If this be not to outrage conſcience, defy reaſon, and dare God, what is? No, you'll ſay, yoo too do reſolve to repent hereafter: Hereafter?

Hereafter? How ill does this word ſound in one who does begin to bow already under the weight of years? Hereafter! How ill does this language become this decaying mouldering body? But ſuppoſe the wheels of time would ſtop, though running now down a headlong precipice; ſuppoſe your ſun would for a while ſtand ſtill, yet what a work have you to finiſh! what guilt to expiate! what ſins to vanquiſh! and what a *day of judgment* to prepare for! Are theſe ſlight conſiderations? Will your ſins, think you, be eaſily aton'd, when their number is ſwollen, not only by length of time, but alſo by an uncontroll'd licentiouſneſs? For a novice in ſin is aw'd by modeſty, held in by ſcruples, and diſcourag'd by regret and remorſe; but the veteran ſinner is carry'd away by a torrent of debauch'd affections, and repeats his follies with a relentleſs confidence, and an authority that brooks no oppoſition. Will it be an eaſy taſk to ſubdue thoſe ſins, which have maintained a long and undiſturb'd dominion, and exercis'd an abſolute ſovereignty over you? What ſhall awaken that ſinner, who, like *Solomon*'s drunkard, *Prov.* xxiii. 35. is inſenſible of ſtripes and wounds: and alas! when rous'd out of the arms of his *Dalilah*, his locks, like *Sampſon*'s, are cut off, the ſpirits retir'd, his ſtrength impair'd, and the force of his enemy augmented; and with what will he conquer? Is it, laſty, a trivial thing to appear before the judgment-ſeat of God, that you ſhould think a moment will ſerve the turn to prepare for it? I will ſuppoſe the

Judge of the whole world as merciful as you can desire him, if you will suppose him too, with reverence be it spoken, to have so much sense, as not to be imposed on; so much integrity, as to expect sincerity, though not perfection; and this alone will make that judgment formidable. I very much fear that young and old do entertain too mild and favourable a notion of that day, and so elude and baffle the force of the most powerful motive to virtue and religion the gospel has: I shall not therefore wander far from the purpose of this paragraph, if I close this exhortation, *to begin to live immediately*, with a short reflection on that day.

We must first bid adieu to this world, to every thing in it that's dear to us, and die ere we can go and appear before God. What a perfect mortification of all our sensual appetites is necessary, ere we can calmly part with all here below! What a long experience of love and duty is necessary to confirm and assure the soul against all its fears and apprehensions! What a vigorous faith to carry us through this dark passage into another world! When we are got there, what a strict trial are we to undergo! There all disguises will be taken off, and every thing appear in its naked nature: there all our superstructures of hay and stubble will be burnt up: only pure solid virtue will bear the test: there darling vices will not pass under the disguise of sins of infirmity: there an honest sloth and harmless luxury will not be thought innocent enough to entitle men to heaven:

heaven: there ſome few good fits will not paſs for godly ſorrow; nor ſome feeble and ſhort-liv'd attempts, for repentance and a change: there the effects of a lucky conſtitution, will not be crowned as the works of grace, and fruits of the divine life: there, in a word, talk will not paſs for action, nor cenſure of others commute for mortification in ourſelves: finally, nothing ſhall be rewarded there, but a conquering faith, an active charity, an humble conſtant zeal, patient perſevering hopes, ſpiritual joys, and pious fears. This needs no application: begin, begin to live before you die; begin to repent, and reform before you be judged.

Sect. 3. A third way of *improving life*, is to avoid and cut off all thoſe things that are injurious to it: ſuch are ſloth that waſtes, and impertinence that embroils it; coldneſs or remiſneſs in religion, that diſpirits and dilutes it; levity and inconſtancy, that diſorder and confound it: and finally, all thoſe evils that ſour and imbitter it. I am ſenſible that theſe heads occur often; and, though it be under different aſpects, yet 'tis poſſible that I may ſometimes light upon the ſame thoughts, nay, peradventure the ſame words; 'tis againſt my will, if I do: but I want ſight to reviſe my papers; and am glad to diſburden my memory as faſt as I can, and therefore charge it with nothing that I have once entruſted to writing: and the toil of recollecting my thoughts, ſcatter'd up and down, like *Sibyls* oracles, in

diſperſed leaves, by a hand, which 'tis impoſſible for me to direct or animate, is moſt intolerable. If therefore I ſlip into any error of this kind, which I ſhall very unwillingly, I cannot but preſume of pardon, having ſo juſt an excuſe. But I proceed.

Firſt, We muſt avoid idleneſs. Sloth is the ruſt of time; ſleep is an image of death, and ſloth of ſleep: the life of the ſluggiſh is but a waking dream; a vacation from all buſineſs, and true enjoyment too; a ceſſation and ſtop, though not of time, which ſtill runs on, yet of the very power and faculties of the ſoul; whereas life conſiſts in the exerciſe of both. How remote then muſt idleneſs be from improving or exalting life? It never ploughs nor ſows, and therefore never reaps; it never plants nor ſets, and therefore never gathers any fruit; nothing great was ever performed by it, nothing great ever enjoyed by it; and ſhall the richeſt fruit that ever grew upon any of the trees of paradiſe, wiſdom and virtue, *i. e.* knowledge and life, be gathered by a ſluggiſh hand? No, tho' no angel, or flaming ſword do ſtop his way; yet are there difficulties in it, too many and too great for this heavy, daſtardly animal to conquer. *Plato*, as I remember, tells us ſomewhere, that a god tied pain and pleaſure by the tails together: there is no coming at the one, by him who ſhuns the other. So is the world contriv'd, that even temporal and ſeeming goods cannot be obtained without the travail of the mind, and toil of the body, and yet what lean, ſtarved, and

and beggarly bleſſings are theſe, compared to thoſe I treat of! The rich man may ſtarve for want of true pleaſure, in the midſt of his glittering heaps; ſorrow may ſit heavy on the heart of the conquerer, or the bride, even on the days of ſolemn triumph and feſtival noiſe; the prince may be a ſlave, an *Egyptian* ſlave, even while he reigns with abſolute and uncontrolled power: but life and pleaſure, content and happineſs, are the inſeparable companions of wiſdom and virtue; let no man therefore flatter himſelf with the hopes of ſuch a treaſure, who lives idly and at his eaſe: he muſt pray, meditate, watch, and exerciſe himſelf in induſtry, ſobriety, and purity, who will overcome the corruptions of his nature, and obtain the tranquillity and liberty of a true Chriſtian. Nor let this frighten any man: for thoſe duties, which are a little troubleſome in the beginning, do ſoon grow eaſy and delightful too. In this ſenſe muſt we underſtand that of the author of *Eccleſiaſticus*, ch. iv. 17, 18. though render'd a little harſhly: *For at the firſt ſhe* (that is, wiſdom) *will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, torment him with her diſcipline, until ſhe may truſt his ſoul, and try him by her laws. Then will ſhe return the ſtraight way unto him, and comfort him, and ſhew him her ſecrets.*

Secondly, Impertinence, or being buſied and employed in trifles, is indeed as different from ſloth, as motion from reſt; but yet ſuch a wretched conſumption of time cannot deſerve the

the name of life: for this is not activity of ſoul, but a poor and mean debaſing of it: fancy, and that a ſilly and extravagant one, may be ſaid to live, but reaſon cannot. That idleneſs, which conſiſts in heavy paſſive dulneſs, is like a ſtate of ſleep without dream or fancy; that which conſiſts in a fluttering and impertinent activity, is nothing elſe but a giddy ferment of the ſpirits, and agitation of the fancy, the incoherent disjointed thoughts, the confus'd and fruitleſs projects and attempts of a dream; and we may almoſt as properly ſay of him that dreams, that he eats and drinks, fights or travels, or whatever he fancies himſelf to do; as we can of this ſort of ſluggard, that he lives. 'Tis true, could a man be for ever impertinent, this ſort of idleneſs would ſeem to ſome men to have no great evil in it; but how could ſuch a mind bear the ſhock of human misfortunes? How could ſuch a ſoul diſcharge the great duties of human ſociety? How could it entertain itſelf with objects agreeable to a rational nature? And if it could do none of theſe things, 'tis impoſſible to conceive how it could be other than miſerable: for though we could ſuppoſe ſuch a creature to be ſo mere a trifle, as never to be nearly concern'd in any changes of fortune, nor ever call'd upon by that community he belongs to; that is, I ſhould almoſt ſay, never to be regarded or minded either by God or man; yet ſtill ſuch a one did no way live up to the excellence of his nature; his buſineſs and enjoyment were not manly and rational; and his childiſh life were there-

therefore only pretty and pleasing to him, because he had a childish and silly soul.

Nor is the grave much better than the gay *impertinent*; or the man of business, if he neglect the main, the one thing necessary, to be preferr'd before the man of mode: sensuality, 'tis true, softens, and drudgery hardens the mind; but both alike intoxicate it, both wed it to this, and alienate it from the other world: it imports very little to what idol one do sacrifice, whether *Ashtaroth*, *Moloch*, or *Mammon*, if we sacrifice not to the true God. In vain do they pretend to any other art, who are ignorant of the art of living; to plod or drudge, intrigue or trade, canvas and court; 'tis all but solemn impertinence, if virtue and religion be neglected: ah! what phantoms, and clouds, and dreams, do men pursue and hunt after, instead of life and peace, of rest and pleasure!

Thirdly, Remisness or lukewarmness in religion, a sort of neutrality between vice and virtue, is the next thing to be avoided: we can never truly live, unless we be entirely uniform, unless we be wholly given up, and without reserve, to the conduct of reason. There is little pleasure in religion, if there be no ardour and fervency in it: 'tis love makes the duty easy, and the prospect delightful. If there be no strength in faith, no life in devotion, no spirit in duty, no desire in hope; this is religion without a soul, 'tis the carcase of an unanimated virtue: what peace, what assurance, what joy, what transport, can ever be the portion of such a Christian?

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Levity and inconſtancy is the laſt thing I will now mention, and the moſt irreconcileable enemy to life: for this does not only interrupt the courſe of life, or, like ſleep or ſloth, make a vaſt chaſm or gap in it, but puts us more back than we had advanced forward; an unhappy guſt of wind that throws us off to the ſea again, when we are almoſt come to ſhore: if we will reap the fruit of victory, we muſt purſue it; if we will find reſt, we muſt be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable; if we will enjoy virtue, we muſt unite and incorporate it with us; 'tis impoſſible that the unconſtant, unſtable proſelyte of virtue ſhould either have a pleaſant life, or a comfortable death: for if he build to day what he pulled down yeſterday; if he practiſe one hour what he condemns another; 'tis impoſſible he ſhould pleaſe himſelf, much leſs his God.

To ſhun the evils, and make the moſt of the goods of life, is none of the leaſt important rules conducing to happineſs, and might properly enough be inſiſted on here. But I begin to tire; and ſince this may better be reduced under the heads of indolence and fruition, I will defer the conſideration of it till I come to treat of them, which I may one time or other do, if I ſee reaſon for it: if not, I would not willingly be impertinent; if I cannot *ſerve the world*, I will not trouble it.

END of PART II.

THIS BOOK IS
THE BEST COPY
AVAILABLE AT
TIME OF
FILMING

Religious Perfection;

OR,

A THIRD PART

OF THE

ENQUIRY

AFTER

HAPPINESS.

BY RICHARD LUCAS, D. D.
Late Prebendary of *Weſtminſter*.

VOLUME II.

HEB. vi. 1.
Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of CHRIST, *let us go on to perfection.*

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TO

Whitelocke Bulſtrode,

OF THE

INNER TEMPLE, Eſquire.

I Here preſent you, my dear Friend, with a diſcourſe wherein I labour to advance the great and true ends of life, the glory of God, and the perfection and happineſs of man. I cannot, I confeſs, pretend to have come up to the dignity of my ſubject; yet I have done what I could, and have attempted it with my utmoſt force. I know you too well to imagine you fond of an ad-

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dreſs of this publick nature: you love the real and ſolid ſatisfactions, not the pomp and ſhew, thoſe ſplendid incumbrances of life: your rational and virtuous pleaſures burn like a gentle and cheerful flame, without noiſe or blaze. However, I cannot but be confident, that you'll pardon the liberty which I here take, when I have told you, that the making the beſt acknowledgment I could to one, who has given me ſo many proofs of a generous and paſſionate friendſhip, was a pleaſure too great to be reſiſted. I am,

Dear Sir,

Unfeignedly Yours,

R. Lucas.

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THE

INTRODUCTION.

BY what ſteps I am advanced thus far in *my Enquiry after Happineſs*, and what connexion or coherence there is, between *this* and two *other* diſcourſes already publiſhed on that ſubject, is very obvious. In the *firſt*, I endeavour to remove thoſe objections which repreſent all enquiries and attempts after true happineſs in this life, either as fantaſtick or unneceſſary; or, which is as bad, vain and to no purpoſe: and after I have aſſerted the *value* and *poſſibility* of happineſs, I do in general point out the true reaſons of our ill ſucceſs and diſappointment in purſuit of it. In the *ſecond*, I ſtate the true notion of *human life*, inſiſt upon the ſeveral kinds of it, and ſhew what qualifications and virtues the *active* and *contemplative* life demand; and then conſider how life may be prolonged and improved. In this *third*, I proſecute the ſame deſign, which I had in the

the two former; the promoting human happineſs. For *life*, *perfection*, and *happineſs* have a cloſe and inſeparable dependance on one another. For as *life*, which is the rational exerciſe and employment of our powers and faculties, does naturally advance on, and terminate in *Perfection*; ſo *Perfection*, which is nothing elſe but the maturity of human virtues, does naturally end in that reſt and peace, that tranquillity, ſerenity, and joy of mind, which we call *Happineſs*. Now *Perfection*, in an abſtracted and metaphyſical notion of it, is a ſtate that admits neither of acceſſion nor diminution. But talking of it practically, and in a manner accommodated to the nature of things, the *Perfection* of man conſiſts in ſuch endowments and attainments as man is generally capable of in this life. And becauſe man may be conſidered either in relation to *this*, or to *another* world, therefore *human Perfection* may, I think, naturally enough be divided into *religious* and *ſecular*. By *ſecular*, I mean that which regards our intereſts in this life: by *religious*, that which ſecures it in eternity. The one more directly and immediately aims at the favour of man; the other at the favour of God: the one purſues that happineſs, whatever it be, that is to be found in outward and wordly advantages; the

the other, that which flows from virtue and a good conſcience. 'Tis eaſy now to diſcern, which of theſe two kinds of *Perfection* is the more deſirable; the one purifies and exalts our nature, the other poliſhes and varniſhes it; the one makes a compleat gentleman, the other a true Chriſtian; the ſucceſs of the one is precarious, that of the other certain, having no dependance on time or chance, the humour or fancy of man; the pleaſure of the one, is ſhort and ſuperficial; that of the other, great and laſting; the *world* admires the one, and *God* approves the other. To be thoroughly perſuaded of this, is a good ſtep towards true wiſdom, as being that which will enable man to ſteer the whole courſe of life aright. But while I prefer the one, I do not preſcribe the neglect or contempt of the other; ſo far am I from it, that I am of opinion, that ſecular *Perfection* has very often ſome influence upon our ſpiritual ſtate, as well as its uſe and advantage in reference to our temporal one: that the moſt admired accompliſhments of a ſecular life, are ſo far from being inconſiſtent with religion, that they naturally ſpring from it, and thrive and flouriſh moſt when they are influenced and cultivated by it; and judging that it might be of ſome ſervice to the world to inform and convince them of *this*, I had it

ſometimes

ſometimes in my thoughts to have treated here as well of ſecular as religious Perfection: but doubting how well this might ſuit with my function, and how far the beſt obſervations I could make on this ſubject might fall ſhort of anſwering the expectation of men of worldly parts and experience, I laid aſide the deſign. Here, then, I confine my meditations wholly to *Religious Perfection*; I examine the nature of it both in general, and in particular; not only ſtating the true notion of it, but alſo deſcending to the ſeveral branches and parts of it; I free it from thoſe miſtakes and diſputes that perplex and encumber it; I lay down the motives to it, and preſcribe the ways of obtaining it.

After this ſhort account of my deſign, the next thing I am to do, is to prevent, if I can, thoſe prejudices which may either wholly fruſtrate, or at leaſt very much hinder and diminiſh the ſucceſs and influence of it. Some are apt to ſtartle at the very mention of Perfection; they have entertained ſuch humble thoughts, not only of human nature, but, as it ſeems, of divine grace too, and evangelical righteouſneſs, that all talk of Perfection ſeems to them like the preaching a new goſpel, and an obtruding upon the world a fantaſtick ſcheme of proud and pretending morality. But this fear will ſoon vaniſh, when I tell ſuch,

ſuch, that I diſcourſe of the *Perfection* of *men* and *angels:* and that I treat *this*, not like a *monk*, or a ſublime and ſubtle *ſchool-man*, but like one, who has been daily converſant with the doubts and ſcruples, with the fears and frailties of human nature, and departing ſouls. I do not pretend to bleſs the world with the diſcovery of *new* truths. If at any time I place *old* ones in a better light; if I wipe off the duſt, which diſpute and time, and the corruption of manners, has here and there ſcattered upon them, 'tis the utmoſt I aim at.

But how numerous, will ſome ſay, are the controverſies that have in every age perplexed this ſubject? *Grace* and *nature*, *perfection* and *ſin*, *merit*, *ſupererogation*, &c. theſe are themes that have exerciſed and embroiled the Church of Chriſt, almoſt through all the ſeveral ages of it down to this day: and with how little advantage to the honour of Chriſtianity, and the intereſt of virtue, have the brighteſt parts, and the deepeſt learning been here employed? To *this*, all I have to ſay, is, I write practically, and conſult the intereſt of ſouls, not *parties*. I cannot but ſee, and that with trouble and regret, how much Chriſtianity has in almoſt all times ſuffered by thoſe nice and ſubtle, by thoſe obſtinate and paſſionate diſputes with which writers

writers have even oppreſſed and ſtifled the moſt *practical* ſubjects; and do moſt earneſtly deſire to ſee the ſpirit of *Polemical* divinity caſt out of the Church of Chriſt, and *that* of a *practical* and *experimental one* eſtabliſhed in the room of it. Though, therefore, I have conſidered thoſe controverſies which concern my ſubject, it was with no other deſign, than to guard and fortify my reader againſt the ill influence of ſeveral errors, with which they abound. I decline all uſeleſs ſpeculations, and labour wholly to reſtore religion to its native ſtrength and beauty; ſo that I think this objection will not touch me, who do not propoſe to write a *learned*, but a *uſeful* book.

If any man be apprehenſive, that 'tis impoſſible to aſſert the doctrine of *Perfection*, without looking a little too favourably towards *Pelagianiſm* or *Enthuſiaſm*, or ſomething of this kind; I do here aſſure ſuch a one, that I advance no *Perfection* that raiſes men above the uſe or need of *means*, or invites them to neglect the *word*, *prayer*, or *Sacraments*, or is raiſed on any other foundation than the *goſpel* of *Chriſt*. I revive not *Pelagianiſm*, nor claſh with St. *Auſtin*; I need not thoſe conceſſions which he makes *Cæleſtius* in the cloſe of his book *de Perfectione Juſtitiæ*. I am perſuaded that the ſtrength of *nature* is too ſlight a

foundation to build *Perfection* on: I contend for *freedom* from no other ſin than *actual, voluntary,* and *deliberate:* and let concupiſcence, or any unavoidable diſtemper, or diſorder of our nature, be what it will, all that I aim at here is, the *reducing,* not *extirpating* it. And finally, how earneſtly ſoever I exhort *Perfection,* I can very well content my ſelf with St. *Auſtin's notion of it,* namely, that it is nothing elſe but a *daily progreſs towards that pure and unſpotted holineſs, which we ſhall attain to in another life.*

Thus, I think, I have ſufficiently guarded this following diſcourſe againſt the miſapprehenſions and jealouſies of all, who have any ſerious concern for religion, how much ſoever they may be ſwayed by ſome particular opinions. But after all, I do not expect that it ſhould meet with a very obliging reception from a great part of the world. Many there are, who will ever openly rally and ridicule all attempts of this kind: and there are others, who will ſecretly ſlight and inwardly deſpiſe them, as the vain and fond projects of well-meaning indeed, but very weak and unexperienced mortals. But this moves me little; theſe men are generally too much ſtrangers to *ſincerity,* to be competent judges of *Perfection:* nor do I wonder, if the corrupt and vicious part of mankind

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be infected with as much malice and envy againſt extraordinary goodneſs, as ſome are againſt power and greatneſs. The conſciouſneſs of much baſeneſs and corruption in one's ſelf, is apt to make one ſtrive to bring down all men to the ſame level, and to believe that there is nothing of *Perfection* in the world, but only a groundleſs or hypocritical pretenſion to it. This is an opinion that ill men greedily embrace, becauſe it gives them ſome kind of peace, ſecurity, and confidence; whereas the contrary opinion, as it would be apt to make them aſhamed of their *preſent* ſtate, ſo would it make them fearful and apprehenſive of their *future* one. I write not therefore to ſuch as theſe, nor can be much concerned what cenſure they paſs on a deſign, againſt which they have an inveterate and obſtinate averſion.

The method I obſerve in this treatiſe is: in the *firſt ſection*, I conſider *Perfection* more generally; in the *ſecond*, the ſeveral parts of it; and in the *laſt*, the *obſtacles* and *impediments* of our attaining it. In the two firſt ſections, I always firſt fix and explain the *notion* of that ſtate of virtue which I diſcourſe of. Next I proceed to the *fruits* or *advantages* of it; and in the laſt place preſcribe the *method* by which it may be attained.

SECT.

SECT. I.

Of Religious Perfection *in general.*

CHAP. I.

Perfection *a confirmed habit of holineſs. This notion conformable to reaſon and ſcripture. The nature of an habit conſidered, according to four properties of it.*

MOST diſputes and controverſies ariſe from falſe and miſtaken notions of the matter under debate; and *ſo* I could ſhew it has happened here. Therefore, to prevent miſtakes, and cut off all occaſions of *contention* (which ſerves only to defeat the influence and ſucceſs of practical diſcourſes) I think it neceſſary to begin here with a plain account *what* it is I mean by *Religious Perfection.*

Religion is nothing elſe, but the purifying and refining nature by grace, the raiſing and exalting our faculties and capacities by

wiſdom and virtue. *Religious Perfection*, therefore, is nothing elſe but the moral accompliſhment of human nature, ſuch a maturity of virtue as man in this life is capable of; *Converſion* begins, *Perfection* conſummates the habit of righteouſneſs: in the one religion is, as it were, in its infancy; in the other, in its ſtrength and manhood; ſo that *Perfection*, in ſhort, is nothing elſe, but a ripe and ſettled habit of true holineſs. According to this notion of religious *Perfection*, he is a *perfect* man, whoſe *mind* is pure and vigorous, and his *body* tame and obſequious; whoſe *faith* is firm and ſteady, his *love* ardent and exalted, and his *hope* full of aſſurance; whoſe *religion* has in it that ardour and conſtancy, and his *ſoul* that tranquillity and pleaſure, which beſpeaks him a child of the *light*, and of the *day*, *a partaker of the Divine Nature, and raiſed above the corruption which is in the world through luſt.*

This account of religious *Perfection* is ſo natural and eaſy, that I fancy no man will demand a *proof* of it; nor ſhould I go about one, were it not to ſerve ſome *further* ends than the mere confirmation of it. It has manifeſtly the countenance both of *reaſon* and *ſcripture*; and how contradictory ſoever ſome ancient and latter ſchemes of *Perfection* ſeem to be, or really are, to one another; yet do they all agree in effect

in what I have laid down. If we appeal to *Reaſon*, no man can doubt, but that an *habit* of virtue has much more of excellence and merit in it, than ſingle accidental *acts*, or uncertain fits and paſſions; ſince an *habit* is not only the ſource and ſpring of the nobleſt actions, and the moſt elevated paſſions, but it renders us more regular and ſteady, more uniform and conſtant in every thing that is good. As to good natural *diſpoſitions*, they have little of ſtrength, little of perfection in them, till they be raiſed and improved into *habits*; and for our *natural faculties*, they are nothing elſe, but the *capacities* of good or evil; they are undetermined to the one or other, till they are fixed and influenced by *moral* principles. It remains then, that religious *Perfection* muſt conſiſt in an *habit* of righteouſneſs. And to prevent all impertinent ſcruples and cavils, I add a *confirmed* and well eſtabliſhed one.

That this is the ſcripture notion of *Perfection*, is manifeſt; Firſt, From the uſe of this word in ſcripture. *Secondly*, From the characters and deſcriptions of the beſt and higheſt ſtate which any ever actually attained, or to which we are invited and exhorted.

1. From the uſe of the word: wherever we find any mention of *Perfection* in *ſcripture*, if we examine the place well,

we ſhall find nothing more intended, than *uprightneſs* and *integrity*, an unblameable and unreproveable life, a ſtate well *advanced* in knowledge and virtue. Thus *upright* and *perfect* are uſed as terms equivalent, *Job* i. *And that man was perfect and upright, fearing God and eſchewing evil:* and *Pſalm* xxxvii. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright man, for the end of that man is peace.* Thus again, when God exhorts *Abraham* to *Perfection*, Gen. xvii. 1. *I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect*, all that he exhorts him to, is a ſteady *obedience* to all his commandments, proceeding from a lively fear of, and faith in him; and this is the general uſe of this word *Perfect* throughout the *Old Teſtament*, namely to ſignify a ſincere and juſt man, that feareth God, and eſcheweth evil, and is well fixed and eſtabliſhed in his duty. In the *New Teſtament*, *Perfection* ſignifies the ſame thing which it does in the *Old*; that is, univerſal righteouſneſs, and ſtrength, and growth in it. Thus the *perfect* man, 2 *Tim.* iii. 17. is one who is *throughly furniſhed to every good work*. Thus St. *Paul* tells us, *Col.* iv. 12. that *Epaphras laboured fervently in prayers for the Coloſſians, that they might ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.* In *James* i. 4. the *perfect* man is one, *who is entire, lacking nothing*, i. e. one who is advanced

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to a *maturity* of virtue through patience and experience, and is fortified and eſtabliſhed in faith, love, and hope. In *this* ſenſe of the word *Perfect* St. *Peter* prays for thoſe to whom he writes his epiſtle, 1 *Pet.* v. 10. *But the God of all grace who called us into his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you.* When St. *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews* to go on to *Perfection*, *Heb.* vi. he means nothing by it, but that ſtate of manhood which conſiſts in a well ſettled *habit* of wiſdom and goodneſs. This is plain, *firſt*, from *ver.* 11, 12. of this *chapter*, where he himſelf more fully explains his own meaning; *and we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope* unto the *end*; *that ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſe.* *Next*, from the latter end of the 5th *chapter*, where we diſcern *what* gave occaſion to this exhortation; *there* diſtinguiſhing *Chriſtians* into two claſſes, *babes* and *ſtrong men*, i. e. *perfect* and *imperfect*, he deſcribes *both* at large thus: *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God, and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat; for every one that uſeth milk is unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs; for he is a babe; but*

ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even thoſe who by reaſon of uſe have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil. And though here the apoſtle ſeems more immediately to regard the *perfection* of *knowledge*; yet the *perfection* of *righteouſneſs* muſt never, in the language of the *ſcripture*, be ſeparated from it. Much the ſame remark muſt I add concerning the *integrity* of righteouſneſs, and the Chriſtians progreſs or advance in it. *Though* the *ſcripture*, when it ſpeaks of *Perfection*, doth ſometimes more directly refer to the one, and ſometimes to the other, yet we muſt ever ſuppoſe that they do mutually imply and include *one another*; ſince otherwiſe the notion of *Perfection* would be extremely maimed and incompleat. I will inſiſt therefore no longer on the uſe of the words *Perfect* and *Perfection* in *ſcripture*: but as a further proof that my notion of *Perfection* is truly *ſcriptural*, I will ſhew,

2. That the utmoſt *height* to which the *ſcripture* exhorts us, is nothing more than a ſteady *habit* of holineſs; that the brighteſt *characters* it gives of the *perfect man*, the lovelieſt *deſcriptions* it makes us of the *perfecteſt ſtate*, are all made up of the *natural* and confeſſed properties of a ripe *habit*. There is no controverſy that I know of about the *nature* of a *habit*, every man's

expe-

experience inſtructs him in the whole philoſophy of it; we are all agreed, that it is a kind of *ſecond nature*, that it makes us exert ourſelves with deſire and earneſtneſs, with ſatisfaction and pleaſure; that it renders us fixed in our choice, and conſtant in our actions, and almoſt as averſe to thoſe things which are repugnant to it, as we are to thoſe which are diſtaſteful and diſagreeable to our nature; and that, in a word, it ſo entirely and abſolutely poſſeſſes the man, that the power of it is not to be reſiſted, nor the empire of it to be ſhaken off; nor can it be removed and extirpated without the greateſt labour and difficulty imaginable. All this is a confeſſed and almoſt palpable truth in *habits of ſin:* and there is no reaſon why we ſhould not aſcribe the ſame force and efficacy to *habits of virtue*; eſpecially if we conſider that the ſtrength, eaſineſs and pleaſure which belong *naturally* to *theſe habits*, receive no ſmall *acceſſion* from the *ſupernatural energy* and vigour of the *Holy Spirit*. I will therefore in a few words ſhew how that *ſtate of righteouſneſs* which the *ſcripture* invites us to, as our *Perfection*, directly anſwers this account I have given of an *habit*.

Is *habit*, in *general*, a ſecond *nature?* This ſtate of righteouſneſs is in ſcripture called *the New Man*, Eph. iv. 24. *the new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. *the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. iv.

Does it conſequently *rule* and *govern* man? Hear how St. *Paul* expreſſes this power of the *habit* of holineſs in himſelf, *Gal.* ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt; nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* This is a conſtant effect of *habits*, and is equally diſcernable in thoſe of *vice* and *virtue*, that they *ſway* and *govern* the man they poſſeſs. *Rom.* vi. 16. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourſelves ſervants, to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs?*

Shall I go on to a more diſtinct and particular conſideration of the properties of an habit? The *firſt* is, a great *averſion* for thoſe things which are *contrary to it*, or obſtruct us in the exerciſe of it. And this is directly the diſpoſition of the *perfect* man towards *temptations* and *ſins*; he is now aſhamed of thoſe things which before he gloried in; he is filled with an holy indignation againſt thoſe things, which before he took pleaſure in; and what before he courted with fondneſs and paſſion, he now ſhuns with fear and vigilance. In brief, the *ſcripture* deſcribes ſuch an one as poſſeſſed with an utter hatred and abhorrence of every evil way, and as an irreconcileable enemy to every thing that is an enemy to his

his virtue and his God. Thus Pſal. cxix. 163. *I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love*; and *verſe* 128. *Therefore I eſteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every falſe way.* And this is a genuine and natural effect of integrity or uprightneſs of heart; whence 'tis the obſervation of our *Saviour*, Matt. vi. 24. *No man can ſerve two maſters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other.* And indeed every where a hatred, a perfect hatred of evil, is accounted as a neceſſary conſequence of the love of God; *Pſalm* xxxvii. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil:* and therefore the *Pſalmiſt* reſolves to practiſe himſelf what he preſcribes to others; *Pſal.* ci. 2, 3. *I will behave myſelf wiſely in a perfect way: O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my houſe with a perfect heart: I will ſet no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave to me,* And how can this be otherwiſe? the love of God muſt neceſſarily imply an abhorrence of evil; and that *habit*, which confirms and increaſes the one, muſt confirm and increaſe the other too.

2. The *next* property of an *habit*, is that the *actions* which flow from it are (if we meet not with violent oppoſition) performed with *eaſe* and *pleaſure:* what is *natural*, is pleaſant

pleaſant and eaſy, and *habit* is a *ſecond nature*. When the love of virtue, and the hatred of vice, have once rooted themſelves in the ſoul, what can be more natural than to follow after the one, and ſhun the other? ſince this is no more than embracing and enjoying what we love, and turning our backs on what we deteſt. This therefore is one conſtant character of *Perfection* in *ſcripture*: *delight* and *pleaſure* are every-where ſaid to accompany the practice of virtue, when it is once grown up to ſtrength and maturity: *The ways of wiſdom are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. iii. 17. *Perfect love caſteth out fear*, 1 Joh. iv. 18. And to him that loves, *the commandments of God are not not grievous*, 1 Joh. v. 3. Hence it is, that *the good man's delight is in the law of the Lord*, and that *he meditates therein day and night*, Pſal. i. 2. Nor does he delight leſs in *action* than *meditation*, but grows in *grace* as much as *knowledge*; and abounds daily more and more in *good works*, as he increaſes in the *comfort* of the *Holy Ghoſt*. Conſonant to *this* property of *Perfection* it is, that in *Pſalm* xix. and cxix. and elſewhere frequently, we hear the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſing a kind of inconceivable joy and tranſport in the meditation and practice of the commands of God. So the firſt Chriſtians, who ſpent their lives in devotion, faith, and

and charity, are ſaid, *Acts* ii. 46. to have *eaten their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart.* And 'tis a delightful deſcription we have of the apoſtles, 2 *Cor.* vi. 10. *As ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things.*

3. *Vigour* and *activity*, or much *earneſtneſs* and *application* of mind, is a *third* property of an *habit.* 'Tis impoſſible not to be intent upon thoſe things for which we have even an *habitual* paſſion, if this *expreſſion* may be allowed me; an inclination, which has gathered ſtrength and authority from cuſtom, will exert itſelf with ſome warmth and briſkneſs. Now certainly there is nothing more frequently required of, or attributed to the *perfect* man in *ſcripture* than *zeal* and *fervency* of ſpirit in the ways of God; and no wonder; for when actions flow at once from principles and cuſtom; when they ſpring from love, and are attended by pleaſure, and are incited and quickened by faith and hope too; how can it be, but that we ſhould repeat them with ſome eagerneſs, and feel an holy impatience as often as we are hindered or diſappointed? and as the nature of the thing ſhews, that thus it *ought* to be, ſo are there innumerable inſtances in the *Old Teſtament* and the *New*, which make it evident that thus it *was.* Shall I mention the example of our *Lord*,

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who went about doing good, Acts x. 38? ſhall I propoſe the labours and travels of St. *Paul?* theſe patterns it may be will be judged by ſome too bright and dazling a light for us to look on, or at leaſt too perfect for us to copy after; and yet St. *John* tells us, that *he, who ſays he abides in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked,* 1 John ii. 6. And we are exhorted to *be followers of the apoſtles, as they were of Chriſt.* But if the fervency of *Chriſt* and St. *Paul* ſeemed to have ſoared out of the reach of our imitation, we have *inferior* inſtances enough to prove the zeal and fruitfulneſs of *habitual* goodneſs. Thus *David* ſays of himſelf, *Pſal.* cxix. 10. *With my whole heart have I ſought thee.* And *Joſiah,* 2 *Kings* xxiii. 25. is ſaid to have *turned to the Lord with all his ſoul, and with all his might.* How fervent was *Anna,* who *departed not from the temple, but ſerved God with faſtings and prayers night and day,* Luke ii. 37. how charitable *Tabitha,* who *was full of good works and alms deeds which ſhe did,* Acts ix. 36! Where ſhall I place *Cornelius?* with what words ſhall I ſet out his virtues? with *what* but thoſe of the *Holy Ghoſt,* Acts x. 2. *He was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his houſe, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* But peradventure ſome may imagine, that there is ſomething ſingular

gular and extraordinary in these eminent persons, which we must never hope to equal; but must be content to follow them at a vast distance. Well, let this be so; what have we to say to whole *churches* animated by the same spirit of zeal? what are we to think of the *churches* of *Macedonia*, whose *charity* St. *Paul* thus magnifies, 2 *Cor.* viii. 2, 3. *In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality. For to their power I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves.* And St. *Paul* declares himself *persuaded* of the *Romans, that they were full of goodness, filled with all knowledge*, Rom. xv. 14. And of the *Corinthians* he testifies, *that they were inriched in every thing, and came behind in no gift.* 1 Cor. i. 5, 6. *That they did abound in all things, in faith, in diligence*, &c. 2 Corinth. viii. 7. I will stop here; 'tis in vain to heap up more instances; I have said enough to shew, that *vigour* and *fervency* in the service of God, is no miraculous gift, no extraordinary prerogative of some peculiar favourite of heaven, but the natural and inseparable *property* of a well-confirmed *habit* of holiness.

Lastly; Is *constancy* and *steadiness* the property of an *habit*? it is an undoubted property of *perfection* too. In *scripture*, good men are every-where represented *as standing*

ſtanding faſt in the faith; ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the works of God; holding faſt their integrity: in one word, as conſtantly following after righteouſneſs, and maintaining a good conſcience towards God and man. And ſo natural is this to one *habitually* good, that St. *John* affirms of ſuch a one, *that he cannot ſin*; 1 John iii. 9. *Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.* Accordingly, *Job* is ſaid *to have feared God and eſchewed evil*; which muſt be underſtood of the conſtant courſe of his life. *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* are ſaid to be *righteous, walking in all the commandments of God blameleſs*, Luke i. 6. *Enoch, Noah, David*, and other excellent perſons, who are pronounced by God *righteous* and *juſt*, and *perfect*, are ſaid in *ſcripture, to walk with God, to ſerve him with a perfect heart, with a full purpoſe of heart to cleave to him*, and the like. And this is that *conſtancy* which *Chriſtians* are often exhorted to; *watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit ye like men, be ſtrong*, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. And of which the firſt followers of our *Lord* left us ſuch remarkable *examples*. The *diſciples* are ſaid to have been continually in the temple *bleſſing and praiſing God*, Luke xxiv. And the *firſt Chriſtians* are ſaid *to have continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles*

apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer, Acts ii. 42.

Thus I think I have ſufficiently cleared my notion of *Perfection* from *ſcripture*: nor need I multiply more texts, to prove what I think no man can doubt of, unleſs he miſtake the main deſign and end of the *goſpel*; which is to raiſe and exalt us to a ſteady *habit* of holineſs: *The end of the commandment*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 Tim. i. 5. *is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conſcience, and of faith unfeigned.* This is the utmoſt *Perfection* man is capable of, to have his mind enlightened, and his heart purified; and to be informed, acted, and influenced by faith and love, as by a vital principle: and all this is eſſential to *habitual* goodneſs.

If any one deſire *further* light or ſatisfaction in this matter, let him read the eighth *chapter* to the *Romans*, and he will ſoon acknowledge, that he there finds the ſubſtance of what I have hitherto advanced. *There*, though the *word* itſelf be not found, the *thing* called *Perfection* is deſcribed in all the ſtrength and beauty, in all the pleaſure and advantages of it: there the diſciple of *Jeſus* is repreſented as one, *who walks not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit*; as one, *whom the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus has ſet free from the law of ſin and death*; one, who οὐ φρονεῖ, *does not mind or reliſh*

reliſh the things of the fleſh, but the things of the ſpirit; one, *in whom the ſpirit of Chriſt dwells:* he does not ſtand at the door and knock; he does not make a tranſient viſit; but here he reigns, and rules, and inhabits: one finally, in whom *the body is dead becauſe of ſin, but the ſpirit is life becauſe of righteouſneſs.* And the reſult of all this is the joy and confidence, the ſecurity and tranſport that becomes the child of God. *Ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The ſpirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt.* And now 'tis no wonder, if the *perfect* man *long for the revelation of the glory of the ſons of God*; if he cry out in rapture, *If God be for me, who can be againſt me? who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? who ſhall ſeparate me from the love of Chriſt?* and ſo on. If any one would ſee the perfect man deſcribed in *fewer* words, he needs but caſt his eye on *Rom.* vi. 22. *But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

This notion of Perfection countenanced by all parties, however different in their expreſſions. Some ſhort reflections upon what the Pelagians, *the* Papiſts, *the* Quakers, *and the* myſtical *writers, have ſaid concerning* Perfection.

AFTER I have ſhewed that this notion of *Perfection* is warranted by *reaſon* and *ſcripture*; I ſee not why I ſhould be very ſolicitous whether it do or do not claſh with the *opinions* of men. But the truth is, if we examine not ſo much the *expreſſions* and *words*, as the *ſenſe* and *meaning* of all *parties*, about this matter, we ſhall find them well enough *agreed* in it at the bottom. And 'tis no wonder, if (notwithſtanding ſeveral incidental *diſputes*) they ſhould yet agree in the *main*: ſince the experience of mankind does eaſily teach us *what* ſort of *Perfection* human nature is capable of; and what can, or cannot, actually be attained by *man*. The *Pelagians* did not contend for an *angelical Perfection*, nor St. *Auſtin* deny *ſuch* a one as was truly *ſuitable to man*: the *one* could not be ſo far a ſtranger to *human nature*, as to exempt it in reality from thoſe errors and defects which the beſt of men complain of,

and labour againſt. Nor was St. *Auſtin* ſo little acquainted with the *power of the goſpel*, and of the *ſpirit*, as not to be well enough aſſured that man might be *habitually good*, and that ſuch were influenced and acted by a firm faith, and a fervent love, and well-grounded hope. The *diſpute* between them then, concerning *Perfection*, did not conſiſt in *this*, whether men might be *habitually* good? This was in reality *acknowledged* on *both* ſides: nor, whether the beſt men were ſubject to defects? For *this* too *both* ſides could not but be ſenſible of: but in theſe *two things* eſpecially; *Firſt*, *What* was to be attributed to *grace*, *what* to *nature*? and this relates not to the *definition* or *eſſence* of *Perfection*, but to the *ſource* and *origin* of it. *Secondly*, Whether thoſe *irregular* motions, defects, and errors, to which the beſt men were ſubject, were to be accounted *ſins* or not? Neither the one ſide nor the other then, as far as I can diſcern, did in truth miſtake the nature of *human Perfection*: each placed it in *habitual* righteouſneſs; the one contended for no *more*, nor did the other contend for *leſs*, in the *perfect* man. And when the *one* aſſerted him free from *ſin*, he did not aſſert him free from *defects*: And while the *other* would not allow the beſt man to be without *ſin*, they did not by *ſin* underſtand

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any thing elſe, but ſuch *diſorders, oppoſitions* to, or *deviations* from the law of *God*, as the *Pelagian* himſelf muſt needs own to be in the *perfect* man. The diſpute then was not, *what* man might or might not attain to? for both ſides agreed him capable of the ſame *habitual* righteouſneſs; both ſides allowed him ſubject to the ſame *frailties*: but *one* ſide would have theſe *frailties* accounted *ſins*, and the *other* would *not*.

Numerous indeed have been the controverſies between the *popiſh* and *reformed churches*, about *precept* and *counſel*, *mortal* and *venial* ſin, the *poſſibility* of fulfilling the law of *God*, the *merit* of good works, and ſuch like. But after all, if we enquire what that *height* of *virtue* is to which the beſt of men may arrive; what thoſe *frailties* and *infirmities* are, to which they are ſubject; 'twere, I think, eaſy to ſhew that the wiſe and good are on all hands *agreed* about this. Nor does it much concern my preſent purpoſe, in what ſenſe, or on what account, *Papiſts* think ſome ſins venial, and *Proteſtants* deny them to be ſo; ſince neither the one nor the other exempt the *perfect* man from *infirmities*, nor aſſert any other *height* of *Perfection*, than what conſiſts in a conſummate and well-eſtabliſhed *habit* of virtue. Some men may, and do talk very extravagantly; but it is very hard to

imagine that ſober and pious men ſhould run in with them. *Such*, when they talk of *fulfilling* the law of *God*, and keeping his commandments, muſt ſurely underſtand this of the law of *God* in a *gracious* and *equitable* ſenſe: And this is no more than what the *ſcripture* aſſerts of every ſincere *Chriſtian*. When they talk of I know not what tranſcendent *Perfection* in *monkery*, they muſt ſurely mean nothing more, than that poverty, chaſtity, and obedience, are *heroick* inſtances of faith and love, of poverty of ſpirit, and purity of heart; and that an *Aſcetick* diſcipline is the moſt compendious and effectual way to a conſummate *habit* of righteouſneſs. *Finally*, By the diſtinction of *precept* and *counſel*, ſuch can never intend ſurely more than this, that we are obliged to *ſome* things under pain of damnation; to *others*, by the hopes of greater degrees of glory: for 'tis not eaſy for me to comprehend, that any man, whoſe judgment is not enſlaved to the dictates of his *party*, ſhould deny *either* of theſe *two* truths. 1. That whatever is neither forbidden nor commanded by any law of *God*, is *indifferent*. 2. That no man can do more than love the *Lord* his *God*, with all his heart, with all his ſoul, and with all his might, and his neighbour as himſelf. I ſay, there is no degree or inſtance of *obedience*, that

is not compriz'd within the *latitude* and *perfection* of theſe words. But whatever ſome of the *Church* of *Rome*, or it may be the greater part of it may think; this, 'tis plain, was the ſenſe of the *ancients*. St. *Auſtin* (*a*) could never underſtand any merit or excellence in thoſe things that were matter of counſel, not precept, unleſs they flowed from, and had regard to the love of God and our neighbour. And *Caſſian's* (*b*) excellent monks reſolved all the value of ſuch things to conſiſt in their tendency to promote apoſtolical purity and charity. And *Gregory Nazianzen* (*c*) thought it very extravagant, to pretend to be *perfecter* than the *rule*, and *exacter* than the *law*.

(*a*) *Quæcunq; non* jubentur, *ſed ſpeciali conſilio* monentur, *tum rectè ſunt, cum referuntur ad diligendum Deum, & proximum propter Deum*, Au. Ench. *cap.* 121.

The *Quakers* have made much noiſe and ſtir about the doctrine of *Perfection*, and have reflected very ſeverely on others, as ſubverting the great deſign of our redemption (which is deliverance from ſin) and upholding the kingdom of darkneſs: but with what *juſtice*, will eaſily appear when I have repreſented their *ſenſe*, which I will do very *impartially*, and in as few and plain

(*b*) *Ac proinde ea quibus qualitates ſtatutas videmus, & tempora; & quæ ſic obſervata ſanctificant, ut omiſſa non polluant*, Media *eſſe manifeſtum eſt, ut puta nuptias, agriculturam, divitias, ſolitudinis remotionem*, &c. Caſſian. Colla. Patr. *Talem igitur definitionem ſupra Jejunii*, &c. *Nec in ipſa ſpei noſtræ terminum defigamus, ſed ut per ipſum ad puritatem cordis & apoſtolicam charitatem perveniri poſſimus*; ibid.

(*c*) Μηδὲ τῷ νόμῳ νομιμώτερος, μηδὲ λαμπρότερος τῷ φωτὸς, μηδὲ τῷ κανόνι ἐνθύτερος, μηδὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ὑψηλότερος. Greg. Nazian.

plain words as I can. Mr. *W. P.* (*d*) tells us, *That they are so far infallible and perfect, as they are led by the Spirit.* This is indeed *true*, but 'tis mere *trifling*: for *this* is an *infallibility* and *perfection* which no man denies, who believes in the *Holy Ghost*; since whoever follows *his* guidance must be in the right, unless the *Holy Ghost* himself be in the wrong. He urges, 'tis true, a great number of *scriptures* to *shew* (they are his own words) *that a state of Perfection from sin (though not in fulness of wisdom and glory) is attainable in this life*; but this is too dark and short a hint to infer the sense of his *party* from it. Mr. *Edward Burroughs* (*e*) is more full; *We believe* (saith he) *that the saints upon earth may receive forgiveness of sins, and may be perfectly freed from the body of sin and death, and in Christ may be perfect and without sin, and may have victory over all temptations, by faith in Jesus Christ. And we believe every saint, that is called of God, ought to press after Perfection, and to overcome the devil and all his temptations upon earth: and we believe, they that faithfully wait for it, shall obtain it, and shall be presented without sin in the image of the father; and such walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and are in covenant with God, and their sins are blotted out, and remembered no more; for they cease to*

(*d*) A key opening, &c.

(*e*) Principles of Truth, &c.

to commit ſin, being born of the ſeed of God. If by *ſin* here, he means, as he ſeems to do, *deliberate* or *preſumptuous* ſin; I do not think any eſtabliſhed *Church*, whether *Proteſtant*, or *Popiſh*, teaches otherwiſe. Mr. *Barclay* (*f*) goes very *methodically* to work, and *firſt* ſets down the ſtate of the queſtion; *then* confutes *thoſe* that differ from him; anſwers their objections out of *ſcripture*; and, *laſtly*, eſtabliſhes his own doctrine. As to the *Perfection* which he aſſerts, he lets us know, that it is to be derived from the *Spirit* of *Chriſt*; that it conſiſts not in an impoſſibility of ſinning, but a poſſibility of not ſinning; and that this *perfect* man is capable of daily growth and improvement. When to this I have added, that he ſpeaks all along of *that* which we call *wilful ſin*, as appears from his deſcription of it; for he calls it *iniquity*, *wickedneſs*, *impurity*, the *ſervice* of *Satan*, and attributes ſuch effects to it as belong not at all to what we call *ſins of infirmity*; when, I ſay, this is added to render the ſenſe *clear*, I can readily ſubſcribe to him: for, I know no ſuch doctrines in our *Church* as thoſe which he there oppoſes; namely, that the *regenerate* are to live in *ſin*, and that their *good works* are *impure* and *ſinful*. But then, he either miſtakes the main point in debate, or prudently declines: for the queſtion is not,

(*f*) *Apol. Theſ.* 8.

whether good men may live in *mortal* or *wilful sin*, but whether good men are not subject to *frailties* and *infirmities*, which are indeed *sins*, though not *imputable* under the covenant of *grace*? Whether the *Quakers* are not in this point *Pelagians*, I do not now enquire; because if they be, they are already considered. Two things there are in Mr. *Barclay*'s state of the question, which I cannot so well approve of; the *one* is that he expresses himself so injudiciously about the growth and improvement of his *perfect* man, that he seems to forget the difference the *scriptures* make between *babes* and full-grown men in *Christ*, and to place Perfection so low, in reference to *positive* righteousness or virtue, as if it consisted in *negative* only, or ceasing from sin. The *other* is, that though he does not peremptorily *affirm* a state of *impeccability* attainable in this life; yet he seems inclinable to *believe* it, and imagines it countenanced by 1 *John* iii. 9. But he ought to have considered, that whatever *impeccability* may be inferred from that *text*, it is attributed, not to some extraordinary persons, but to all, whosoever they be, that are born of *God*; but this is out of my way. All that I am to observe upon the whole is, that these men place *Perfection* especially in refraining from *sin*: I advance *higher*, and place it in a well-settled *habit* of righteousness. And I believe

believe they will be as little diſſatisfied with me for this, as I am with them, for aſſerting the perfect man freed from ſin. For, as Mr. *Barclay* expreſſes himſelf, I think he has in reality no adverſaries but *Antinomians* and *Ranters*.

As to that Perfection which is magnified by *myſtical* writers, ſome of them have only darkened and obſcured the plain ſenſe of the *goſpel*, by figurative and unintelligible terms. *Thoſe* of them, which write with more life and heat than other men ordinarily do, recommend nothing but that *holineſs* which begins in the *fear*, and is conſummate in the *love* of *God*; which enlightens the mind, purifies the heart, and fixes and unites man to his ſovereign good, that is, *God:* and I am ſure I ſhall not differ with *theſe*.

There are, I confeſs, almoſt innumerable ſayings of the *fathers*, which ſufficiently teſtify how little friends they were to *Perfection*, in ſuch a notion of it as is too generally embraced in the Church of *Rome*. The *primitive* ſpirit breathed nothing but *humility:* it was a profeſſed enemy to all ſelf-confidence and arrogance, to ſupererogation and merit; and it invited men earneſtly to reflect upon the *ſins* and *ſlips* of life, and on that *oppoſition* which the law of the *body* maintains againſt the law of the

the *mind*, in ſome degree or other, in the *beſt* men. This conſideration forced the *biſhop* of *Condome* to that plain and honeſt *confeſſion*; *Itaque Juſtitia noſtra, licet per charitatis infuſionem ſit vera*, &c. *Though our righteouſneſs, becauſe of that love, which the ſpirit ſheds abroad in our heart, be ſincere and real; yet it is not abſolute and conſummate, becauſe of the oppoſition of concupiſcence: ſo that it is an indiſpenſable duty of Chriſtianity, to be perpetually bewailing the errors of life: Wherefore we are obliged humbly to confeſs with St.* Auſtin, *that our righteouſneſs in this life conſiſts rather in the pardon of our ſins than in the perfection of our virtues.* All this is undoubtedly true, but concerns not me: I never dream of any man's paſſing the courſe of life *without ſin:* nor do I contend for ſuch a *Perfection* as St. *Auſtin* calls *abſolute*, which will admit of no increaſe, and is exempt from defects and errors. Though on the *other* hand, I confeſs, I cannot but think, ſome carry this matter too far; and while they labour to abate the *pride* and *confidence* of man, give too much encouragement to *negligence* and *preſumption*. I cannot ſee how frequent relapſes into *deliberate* acts of wickedneſs can conſiſt with a well-ſettled and eſtabliſhed habit of goodneſs. The heat of diſpute in ſome, and a ſort of *implicit* faith

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for their *authority* in others, has produced many *unwary expreſſions*, and I doubt very *unſound* and pernicious *notions* about this matter.

CHAP. III.

Several inferences deduced from the true notion of Perfection. With a plain method how perſons may judge of their preſent ſtate. The difference between the extraordinary primitive converſions, and thoſe which may be expected in our days, with a remark about infuſed *habits.*

HAVING in the *two former* chapters fixed the notion of religious *Perfection*, and proved it conſonant to *reaſon* and *ſcripture*; and not ſo only, but alſo made it appear, that it is countenanced by the unanimous *conſent* of *all*, who have ever handled this ſubject: I have nothing now to do, but by way of *inference*, to repreſent the *advantages* we may reap from it.

1. It is from hence plain, that *Perfection* muſt not be placed in fantaſtick ſpeculations or voluntary obſervances, but in the ſolid and uſeful *virtues* of the *goſpel*; in the works of faith, the labour of love, and the

the patience of hope; in the purity and humility of a child of light; in the conſtancy and magnanimity which becomes one who has brought the body into ſubjection, and has ſet his affections on things above. *This* ſtate of *Perfection* is well enough deſcribed by the rule of St. *Bennet. Ergo his omnibus humilitatis gradibus aſcenſis, monachus mox ad charitatem,* &c. *The monk having paſſed through theſe ſeveral ſtages of humility, or mortification, will arrive at that love of God which caſteth out fear, by which he will be enabled to perform all things with eaſe and pleaſure, and, as it were, naturally, which before he performed with reluctancy and dread; being now moved and acted, not by the terrors of hell, but by a delight in goodneſs, and the force of an excellent habit: both which, Chriſt by his Spirit vouchſafes to increaſe and exalt in his ſervants now cleanſed and purged from all ſin and vice.*

2. This notion of *Perfection* proves all men to lie under an *obligation* to it: for as all are *capable* of an *habit* of holineſs, ſo is it the duty of all to *endeavour* after it. *If Perfection* were indeed an *angelical ſtate*; if it did conſiſt in an exemption from all defects and infirmities, and in ſuch an elevation of virtue, to which nothing can be added; *then*, I confeſs, all *diſcourſes* of it, and much more all *attempts* after it, would be

be vain and inſolent too. *If* again, it did conſiſt in ſome *heroick* pitch of virtue, which ſhould appear to have ſomething ſo *ſingular* in it, as ſhould make it look more like a *miracle* than a *duty*, it were *then* to be expected but once in an *age* from ſome *extraordinary* perſon, called to it by peculiar *inſpiration* and extraordinary *gifts*. But if *Chriſtian Perfection* be, as I have proved, only a well-confirmed *habit* in goodneſs; if it differ from *ſincerity* only, when *ſincerity* is in its *weakneſs* and *infancy*, not when *grown* up; then 'tis plain, that *every Chriſtian* lies under an *obligation* to *it*. Accordingly the *ſcripture* exhorts all *to perfect holineſs in the fear of God, to go on to Perfection*, Heb. vi. and it aſſigns this as one great end of the inſtitution of a ſtanding *miniſtry* in the *churches* of *Chriſt*, namely, *the perfecting the ſaints, the edifying the body of Chriſt, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, Epheſ. iv. 12, 13. And hence it is, that we find the *apoſtles* purſuing this great end, by their *prayers* and *labours*, earneſtly contending and endeavouring to preſent all Chriſtians *perfect* before *God*, 1 Theſſ. iii. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly, that we might ſee your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith,*

faith, Coloſ. i. 28. *When we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wiſdom, that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus*, ſee 1 *Pet.* v. 10. *Coloſ.* iv. 13. Nay further, the *ſcripture* frequently puts us in mind that they are in a ſtate of *danger*, who do not *proceed* and *grow* in grace, and preſs on towards *Perfection*. Now all this is very eaſily accountable, taking *Perfection* for a well-ſettled *habit* of holineſs; but on no *other* notion of it.

3. This account of *Perfection* removes *thoſe ſcruples* which are often ſtarted about the *degrees* of holineſs and *meaſures* of duty, and are wont to diſturb the peace, clog the vigour, and damp the alacrity of many well-meaning and good people. Nay, many of acute parts and good learning are often puzzled about this matter; ſome teaching that man is not bound to do his beſt; others on the quite contrary, that he is ſo far bound to it, that he is always obliged to *purſue* the moſt *perfect duty*, to chuſe the moſt *perfect* means, and to exert the *utmoſt* of that *ſtrength*, and act according to the *utmoſt* of that *capacity*, with which God has endowed him. Now all theſe things, when we come to apply theſe *general* doctrines to *particular* inſtances, and a vaſt variety of *circumſtances*, have ſo much *latitude*, ambiguity, and uncertainty in them, that men of

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tender conſciences, and *defective* underſtandings, reap nothing from ſuch high-flown *indefinite* diſcourſes, but *doubts* and *ſcruples*. It requires a ſtrong and penetrating judgment to reſolve what is the utmoſt *extent* of our power and capacity; *what* the *beſt* mean, and what the *moſt perfect* duty, when *many* preſent themſelves to us, and all *variouſly* circumſtantiated. But now, as I have ſtated matters, we are bound indeed to purſue and labour after *growth* and *improvement* in the love of God, and charity towards our neighbour, in purity, humility, and the like. And this we ſhall certainly do, if we be *ſincere*; in other matters we are left to our *prudence*, and if the error of our *choice* proceed only from an error in *judgment*, and a *corruption* in our *hearts*, we are *ſafe enough*.

4. 'Tis very eaſy to *diſcern* now *where* we ſtand in reference to *Perfection*; how *remote* we are from it, or how *near* to it. For the *nature* of an *habit* being plain and intelligible, the *effects* and *properties* of it obvious to the meaneſt capacity, 'tis *eaſy* to determine, upon an impartial *examination*, whether we be *habitually* good or not, or what *approaches* we have made towards it. And becauſe this is a matter of no ſmall *importance*, and men are generally backward enough to advance too far into ſuch *re-*

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flections and *applications*, as may breed any *disturbance* to their *peace*, or any *diminution* of their good *opinion* for *themselves*, though neither the one nor the other be too well grounded; I shall not think my time misspent, if I here take this task upon me; and endeavour, by several *particular* deductions, to lay every man's state as plainly open to his *view* as I can.

1. Then from the notion I have given of *Perfection*, it appears, that *if* a man's life be very *uneven*, unconstant, and contradictory to itself; if he be to-day a *saint*, and to-morrow a *sinner*; if he yield today to the motives of the *gospel* and impulses of the *spirit*, and to-morrow to the solicitations of the *flesh* and temptations of the *world*, he is far from being *perfect*; so far, that there is not ground enough to conclude him a *sincere* or *real* tho' *imperfect* convert. The only certain proof of *regeneration* is *victory*; *he that is born of God, overcometh the world*, 1 John v. 4. *Faith*, tho' it be *true*, is not presently *saving* and *justifying*, till it have subdued the *will* and captivated the heart, *i. e.* till we begin to *live by faith*, which is evident from *that* corn in the *parable*, which tho' it shot up, yet had it not *depth* of earth, nor *root* enough, and therefore was *withered* up, and brought forth *no* fruit. Regret and sorrow for sin is

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an excellent paſſion; but till it has ſubdued our corruptions, changed our affections, and purified our hearts, 'tis not that *ſaving* repentance in the apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* vii. 10. *Godly ſorrow worketh repentance, not to be repented of.* We may have ſudden heats and paſſions for virtue; but if they be too ſhort-liv'd to implant it in us, this is *not* that *charity* or *love* which animates and impregnates the new creature mentioned, *Gal* v. 6. *faith working by love.* Laſtly, We may have good purpoſes, intentions, nay, reſolutions; but if theſe prove too weak to obtain a *conqueſt* over our *corruptions*, if they prove too weak to reſiſt the *temptations* we are wont to fall by, 'tis plain that they are not ſuch as can demonſtrate us *righteous*, or intitle us to a *crown*, which is promiſed to him that *overcometh.* And here I cannot but remark, to how little purpoſe *controverſies* have been multiplied about the *juſtification* of man. 'Tis *one* thing for *God* to *juſtify us*, *i. e.* to *pardon* our *ſins*, and account us *righteous*, and *his* children; and *another* for us to *know*, or be *aſſured*, that he does ſo. If we enquire after the *former*, 'tis plain to me, that no man can be *accounted* righteous by *God*, till he really *is* ſo: and when the man is *ſanctified* throughout in ſpirit, ſoul, and body; then is he certainly *juſtified*, and not

till then. And this I think is confeſſed by all, except *Antinomians*; and whatever *difference* there is amongſt *Chriſtians* in this matter, it lies in the forms and variety of *expreſſion*. They, that contend earneſtly for the neceſſity of *good works*, do not, I ſuppoſe, imagine, that the *works* are holy, before the *heart* is ſo; for, as is the *fountain*, ſuch will be its *ſtreams*; as is the *tree*, ſuch will be its *fruits*. What abſurdity then is there in admitting that men are juſtified before they bring forth good works; if they cannot bring forth good works, till they be ſanctified and changed? On the other hand, they who contend ſo earneſtly for *juſtification* by *faith* without *works*, do not only ſuppoſe that the man is throughly changed, by the *infuſion* of *habitual grace*; but alſo that this grace, as ſoon as it has opportunity, will exert and expreſs itſelf in *good works*: and they do readily acknowledge that the *faith* which does *not* work by *love*, is an *hiſtorical* unanimated *faith*. And if ſo, how natural is it to compriſe in that holineſs, which *juſtifies* not only the change of the *heart*, but of the *actions*? But here I think it is well worth the conſidering, whether that thorough *change* in the *nature* of a ſinner, which is called *holineſs*, be now effected, at *once* and in a *moment*, and not rather *gradually*, and in *time*? for this may give

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ſome light to the doctrine of *juſtification*, and draw us off from ſpeculations and theories to more uſeful and practical thoughts and diſcourſes about it. 'Tis true, in the *primitive* times, when the conviction of a ſinner was wrought by a dazling light, by ſurprizing miracles, by exuberant influxes of the *ſpirit*, and the concurrence of many extraordinary things, *ſanctification* (as in the *gaoler* and his *family*, Acts xvi.) might be *begun* and *finiſhed* in the *ſame* hour. But I doubt it is *rarely* ſo with us at this day; our vices are not ſo ſuddenly ſubdued, nor our virtues ſo ſuddenly implanted. *Our* convictions, in the beginning of converſion, are ſeldom ſo full and clear as *theirs:* and, if we may judge by the *effects*, 'tis but ſeldom that the principle of a new life is infuſed in the *ſame* plenty and power it appears to have been in *them*. And if ſo, then theſe things will follow; 1. Though in the firſt *plantation* of the *goſpel* men being converted, as it were, in a *moment*, ingrafted by *baptiſm* into *Chriſt*, and receiving the *Holy Ghoſt*, the *earneſt* of their *juſtification* or acceptance with *God*, and their future *glory:* we may very well ſay of them, that they were not only *juſtified*, but alſo *knew* themſelves to be ſo, *before* they had brought forth any other *fruit* of righteouſneſs, than what was implied in

the *dedication* of themſelves to *Chriſt* by that ſolemn rite of *baptiſm*: but at *this* day, when converſion is not effected in the ſame manner; when faith and good works do mutually cheriſh one another; when righteouſneſs is not brought forth into victory, but by *long* labour and travail; I ſee not why *faith* and *good works* may not be pronounced *jointly* and *antecedently* neceſſary to our *juſtification*. 2. The doctrine of *infuſed habits* has been much ridiculed and expoſed as abſurd, by ſome men; and, I muſt confeſs, if it be *eſſential* to a *habit*, to be acquired by length of time and repetition of the ſame acts, then an *infuſed habit* is a very odd expreſſion: but why *God* cannot produce in us thoſe ſtrong diſpoſitions to virtue in a *moment*, which are *naturally* produced by time; or why *we* may not aſcribe as much efficacy to *infuſed grace*, as philoſophers are wont to do to *repeated acts*, I cannot ſee; nor can I ſee, why ſuch *diſpoſitions*, when *infuſed*, may not be called *habits*, if they have all the *properties* and *effects* of an habit. And that ſuch excellent diſpoſitions *were* on a ſudden wrought in the minds of Chriſtians in the beginning of Chriſtianity, is too plain from the hiſtory of thoſe times to need a proof. But whether ſuch changes are ordinarily effected ſo ſuddenly at this day, we have much reaſon

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to *doubt*; nay, I think it appears from what I have ſaid, there is ſufficient reaſon to *deny* it. And, if ſo, the *infuſion* of *habits* cannot be ſo properly inſiſted on *now* as *then*; and *we* may be more ſubject to make *unwarrantable* inferences from the doctrine of *infuſed habits*, than *they* were in thoſe bright and *miraculous* days. 3. As our *progreſs* to *ſanctification* muſt be *ſlower* than formerly, as it muſt be *longer* before the grace that is infuſed, ſo far maſter our corruption, and dilate and diffuſe itſelf through our whole nature, as that we may juſtly be denominated *holy* and *righteous* from the prevalence of this holy principle: ſo, by a neceſſary conſequence, our *juſtification* muſt commence *later*. But, after all, I know not why we ſhould be ſo inquiſitive after the *time* of our *juſtification* by *God*. The *comfort* of a Chriſtian does not reſult immediately from *God's juſtifying* him, but from *his knowing* that he does ſo. And if this be the thing we are now ſearching after, namely, what rational *aſſurance* we can have of our *juſtification*, and when, as indeed it is; then, though I do not pretend to determine, that man *is* not, or *may* not be juſtified or accounted righteous by *God*, upon a thorough change of mind or ſoul, before this change *diſcovers* itſelf in a ſeries of *victories* over thoſe *temptations* by which he was led *captive* before; yet I

aſſert, *firſt*, that the true and ſolid proof of the *ſanctification* of the *heart*, is *ſanctity* of life. *Next*, when I talk of *victory*, I ſuppoſe man *engaged*, I ſuppoſe him *encountered* by *temptations* and *enemies*; and *then* I affirm, that the *faith*, which is not ſtrong enough to *conquer*, is not ſtrong enough to *juſtify*. If any man demand, may not that faith, which is foiled to *day*, conquer to *morrow*? I anſwer, I muſt leave this to *God*: I can pronounce nothing of the *ſincerity* of the heart, but by the outward deportment and *ſucceſs*. And if this be the proper way of judging of a man's ſincerity, I am ſure I may with much more confidence affirm, that nothing leſs than *victory* can be a clear argument of *Perfection*. My buſineſs therefore ſhall ever be to be *Holy*, and then I am *ſure* I ſhall be *juſtified*. If *I be* Holy, *God*, who cannot err, will certainly *account* me ſo; and if I *ceaſe* to *be* ſo, *God* muſt *ceaſe* to account me ſo. And this is all which I deſign by this long paragraph: that is, to render men more careful and diligent in making their calling and election ſure, and to prevent preſumption and groundleſs confidence. And that nothing that I have here *ſaid* may be perverted to a *contrary* purpoſe; that no man, from ſome paſſionate reſolutions or ſudden changes of his own mind, may be tempted to conclude too *haſtily* of his

his being *juſtified*, as if the change wrought in him were equal to that commonly effected in the *firſt* converts of *Chriſtianity*; I think it not amiſs to put ſuch a one in mind, that even *theſe* were not juſtified, unleſs they did *profeſs Chriſt* with the *mouth*, as well as *believe* in him with the *heart*; and that this *public* profeſſion of Chriſtianity in *thoſe* days was equivalent to *many* good works in *theſe*.

2*dly*, He, that feels in himſelf little or no fervency of ſpirit, little or no hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, has reaſon to ſuſpect, that his *regularity* is little more than common *decency* and *civility*, and to doubt, leſt his *religion* be nothing elſe but *cuſtom* or common *prudence*. I ſee not *how* ſo much *indifference* and *ſluggiſhneſs* can conſiſt with a firm *belief* and *expectation* of a *crown*, with a ſincere *love* of *God*, and *righteouſneſs*. But if we may ſuppoſe ſuch a one reſtrained from evil, and preſerved in the way of duty, after a ſort, by the *fear* of *God*, and a *deſire* of *heaven*; yet certainly this can be but the *infancy* of the *new creature* at moſt: and the beſt advice, than can be given ſuch a one, is ſurely that of St. *Peter*, that *by adding one degree of virtue to another, he would uſe all diligence to make his calling and election ſure*, 2 Pet. i. 10.

3*dly*, If a man's religion produce very *few* good works, or ſuch only as put him

to little travail or expence, we may conclude that this man is not *perfect*; his charity is too weak, too narrow to be that of an *exalted* Chriſtian: the beſt that we can think of ſuch a one is, that he is yet taken up in the *diſcipline* of *mortification*, that he is *contending* with his *luſts* and *paſſions*, which are not yet ſo far reduced, ſo far ſubdued and brought under, as to leave him in a ſtate of *liberty* and *peace*, and in a capacity of *extending* and *enlarging* his *charity*. This remark, that the *inconſiderableneſs* of our good works is reaſon enough to queſtion, not only one's *Perfection* but *ſincerity*, holds good in ſuch caſes only, where neither *opportunity* nor *capacity* of higher and nobler performances is wanting. I dare not pronounce that no man can be a *Chriſtian*, unleſs he be fit to be a *martyr*: 'tis true, the *loweſt* degree of *ſincerity* muſt imply a purpoſe and *reſolution* of univerſal *obedience*, in defiance of all temptations; but yet *that* grace, for ought I can prove to the contrary, may be ſufficient to *ſave* a man, that is ſufficient to maſter the difficulties *he* is to encounter with, altho' he ſhould not be able to grapple with the diſtempers and tryals to which the body and the ſtate of *another* man may be ſubject. Surely the wiſdom and the faithfulneſs of God can be no further concerned, than to qualify any one for the diſcharge

diſcharge of *thoſe* duties which he thinks fit to *call* him to: and if the diſcharge of ſuch duties be not a ſufficient proof of our ſincerity, we can never have any, but muſt be always held in ſuſpence and torture about our future ſtate. I ſee no reaſon to queſtion, but that the diſciples of our Lord were in a ſtate of *grace* before the *reſurrection*, and the following *Pentecoſt:* and yet I think I have plain reaſon to believe, that they were not fit to be *martyrs* and *confeſſors* till then; the *grace* they had *before* might, I doubt it not, have enabled them to live *virtuouſly* amidſt *common* and *ordinary* temptations: but it was neceſſary that they ſhould be endowed with *power* from on *high*, before they could be fit to encounter thoſe *fiery trials*, to which the *preaching* of the *goſpel* was to expoſe them. To this ſurely our Maſter refers, when he tells the *Phariſees*, *That the children of the bride-chamber were not to faſt while the bridegroom was with them:* when he tells *his* diſciples, *I have many things to ſay, but you cannot bear them yet:* when he aſked the ſons of *Zebedee*, *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with?* Matth. xx. 21. If this be true divinity, as I am (I had almoſt ſaid) confident it is; then I am confident, that which requires very *unaccountable* teſts of a man's *ſincerity*,

ſincerity, is very *extravagant*. For example, when men talk at this rate, that a ſincere Chriſtian ſhould have ſuch an *abhorrence* for *ſin*, as to fear *guilt* more than its *puniſhment*: ſuch a *love* of *God*, as rather than offend him to be content to precipitate and plunge himſelf into the jaws, not of *death*, like the martyrs, but of *hell* itſelf.

4*thly*, If the duties of religion be very *troubleſome* and *uneaſy* to a man, we may from hence conclude, that he is not *perfect*: for tho' the *beginning* of wiſdom and virtue be generally *harſh* and *ſevere* to the *fool* and *ſinner*, yet to him that has *conquered*, the yoke of Chriſt is *eaſy*, and his burthen *light*; *to him that is filled with the love of God, his commandments are not grievous*; hence is that obſervation of the ſon of *Sirach*, Ecclus. iv. 17, 18. *For at the firſt ſhe will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her diſcipline, until ſhe may truſt his ſoul, and try him by her laws; then will ſhe return the ſtraight way unto him, and comfort him, and ſhew him her ſecrets.* The reaſon of this aſſertion is palpable; it is the nature of an *habit* to render *difficult* things *eaſy*, *harſh* things *pleaſant*, to fix a *floating* and *uncertain* humour, to nurſe and ripen a weak and tender *diſpoſition* into *nature*. And 'tis as reaſonable to expect theſe effects in *religious* as in any *other* ſorts of *habits*.

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Laſtly, He who does not find *religion* full of *pleaſure*, who does not *glory* in *God*, and *rejoice* in our *Lord Jeſus*, he who is not filled with an humble *aſſurance* of the *divine favour*, and a joyful *expectation* of *immortality* and *glory*, does yet *want* ſomething; he is yet *defective*, with reſpect either to the *brightneſs* of *illumination*, the *abſoluteneſs* of *liberty*, or the *ardor* of *love*; he may be a *good* man, and have gone a *great* way in his Chriſtian *race*; but there is ſomething ſtill behind to *compleat* and *perfect* him: ſome *error* or other creates him groundleſs *ſcruples*; ſome *incumbrance* or *impediment* or other, whether an infelicity of temper, or the incommodiouſneſs of his circumſtances, or a little too warm an application towards ſomething of the world, *retards* his *vigour*, and *abates* his *affections*.

I have now finiſhed all that I can think neceſſary to form a general *idea* of religious *Perfection*: for I have not only given a plain *definition* or *deſcription* of it, and *confirm'd* and *fortified* that deſcription by *reaſon* and *ſcripture*, and the *concurrent ſenſe* of *all ſides* and *parties*; but have alſo by various *inferences*, deduced from the general notion of *Perfection*, precluded all groundleſs *pretenſions to it*, and enabled men to ſee how *far* they are *removed* and *diſtant* from it, or how *near* they *approach* it. The *next* thing

thing I am to do, according to the method I have propoſed, is, to conſider the *fruits* and *advantages* of *Perfection*. A conſideration which will furniſh us with many great, and, I hope, effectual *incitements* or *motives* to it; and demonſtrate its *ſubſerviency* to our *happineſs*.

CHAP. IV.

A general account of the bleſſed fruits *and* advantages *of Religious Perfection. Which is reduced to theſe four heads.* 1. *As it advances the honour of the true and living* God, *and of his Son* Jeſus, *in the world.* 2. *As it promotes the good of mankind. Theſe two treated of in the chapter of zeal.* 3. *As it produces in the perfect man a full aſſurance of eternal happineſs and glory.* 4. *As it puts him in poſſeſſion of true happineſs in this life. Theſe two laſt,* aſſurance *and preſent* happineſs *or* pleaſure, *handled in this chapter. Where the pleaſures of the ſinner and of the perfect Chriſtian are compared.*

OF the *two former* I ſhall ſay nothing *here*; deſigning to inſiſt upon them more particularly in the *following* ſection, under the *head* of *zeal*, where I ſhall be obliged by my *method* to conſider the *fruit* of

of it; only I cannot *here* forbear *remarking*, that *Perfection*, while it promotes the honour of *God* and the good of *man*, does at the ſame time promote our *own happineſs* too; ſince it muſt on this account moſt effectually recommend us to the love of the *one* and the *other*; *Them that honour me*, ſaith God, *I will honour*, 1 Sam. ii. 30. And our Saviour obſerves, that even *Publicans and Sinners love thoſe who love them*, Matth. v. 46. Accordingly St. *Luke* tells us of Chriſt, *Luke* ii. 52. *That Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and man*; and of thoſe eminently devout and charitable ſouls, *Acts* ii. *that they had favour with all the people*; ſo reſiſtleſs a charm is the beauty and lovelineſs of perfect charity, even in the moſt depraved and corrupt times. And what a *bleſſing* now, what a *comfort*, and what a *pleaſure* is it, to be the favourite of *God* and *man!*

The *third* and *fourth* I will now diſcourſe of, and that the more *largely*, becauſe as to *aſſurance*, it is the *foundation* of that *pleaſure* which is the richeſt *ingredient* of human *happineſs* in *this* life. And, *as to our preſent happineſs*, which is the *fourth* fruit of *Perfection*, it is the very *thing* for the ſake of which I have *engaged* in my *preſent* ſubject. And therefore it is very fit that I ſhould ren-

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der the tendency of *Perfection* to procure our *preſent Happineſs* very conſpicuous. Beginning therefore with *aſſurance*, I will aſſert the *poſſibility* of attaining it in *this* life; not by embroiling myſelf in the brakes of ſeveral nice and ſubtle *ſpeculations* with which this ſubject is overgrown; but by laying down in a *practical* manner, the *grounds* on which *aſſurance* depends; by which we ſhall be able at once to diſcern the truth of the *doctrine* of *aſſurance*, and its *dependance* upon *Perfection*.

Now *aſſurance* may relate to the time *preſent*, or to *come*: for the reſolution of *two* queſtions, gives the mind a perfect *eaſe* about this matter. The *firſt* is, am I *aſſured* that I am at *preſent* in a ſtate of grace? The *ſecond*, am I *aſſured* that I ſhall *continue* ſo to my life's *end*? To begin with the *firſt*: the anſwer of this enquiry depends on *three* grounds.

Firſt, A divine *revelation*, which declares in general, *who* ſhall be *ſaved*; namely, they *who believe* and *repent*. Nor does any *ſect* doubt, but that *repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, are the indiſpenſable *conditions of life*. 'Tis true, the notion of *repentance* is miſerably *perverted* by *ſome*, and that of *faith* by *others*: but what remedy is there againſt the luſts and paſſions of men? The

ſcripture does not only *require* repentance and faith; but it *explains* and *deſcribes* the nature of *both*, by ſuch conſpicuous and infallible *characters*, that no man *can* be miſtaken in theſe *two* points, *but* his error muſt be owing to ſome criminal *prejudices* or *inclinations* that biaſs and pervert him. *Good men* have ever been *agreed* in theſe matters: and catholick *tradition* is nowhere more *uncontroulable* than here; the general doctrine of all *ages* hath been, and in *this* ſtill is, that by *repentance* we are to underſtand a *new nature* and *new life*: and by *faith* when diſtinguiſhed from *repentance* (as it ſometimes is in *ſcripture*) a *reliance* upon the *mercy* of *God* through the *merits* and *interceſſion* of *Jeſus*, and *atonement* of *his* blood. *Heaven* lies open to all that perform theſe *conditions*; every page of the *goſpel* atteſts this; *this* is the ſubſtance of *Chriſt's* commiſſion to his *apoſtles*, that they ſhould preach *repentance* and *remiſſion* of ſins through his name amongſt *all* nations. And this is one bleſſed advantage, which *revealed* religion has above *natural*; that it contains an expreſs *declaration* of the Divine Will, concerning the *pardon* of all ſins whatſoever upon theſe *terms*. *Natural* religion indeed teaches us, that *God* is *merciful*; but it teaches us, that he is *juſt* too; and it can never *aſſure* us, what *bounds God* will

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ſet to the exerciſe of the *one* or the *other*; and *when* juſtice, and *when* mercy ſhall take place; *what* ſins *are*, and *what* are not capable of the benefit of ſacrifice and repentance. And this *uncertainty*, conſidering the ſins of the beſt life, was ever naturally apt to beget deſpondencies, melancholy, and ſometimes a ſuperſtitious dread of *God*.

The *ſecond* ground of aſſurance, as it relates to our preſent ſtate, is an *application* of the conditions of life laid down in the goſpel to a man's own *particular* caſe, thus; *they* that *believe* and *repent*, ſhall be *ſaved*; *I believe* and *repent*, therefore *I* ſhall be *ſaved*. Now that a man upon an *examination* of himſelf, may be throughly *aſſured*, that he *does* believe and repent, is evident from *ſcripture*, which does not only *exhort* us to enter upon this *examination*, but alſo aſſerts, that *aſſurance*, *joy*, and *peace*, are the natural *fruits* of it: but *let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Examine yourſelves whether you be in the faith; prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *But ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope*

hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear, 1 Pet. iii. 13. *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments,* 1 John ii. 3. *Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not,* then *have we confidence towards God,* 1 John iii. 2. 'Tis true, men do often *deceive* themſelves, and entertain a more favourable opinion of their ſtate than they ought. But whence proceeds this? Even from too *partial* or *ſuperficial* reflections on themſelves, or *none* at all. And therefore the apoſtle teaches us plainly, that the only way to correct this error, is a *ſincere* and *diligent ſearch* into ourſelves: *for if a man think himſelf to be ſomething when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf: but let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another,* Gal. vi. 34. But it is *objected* againſt all this, that the *heart* of man is ſo *deceitful,* that it is a very difficult matter to make a thorough *diſcovery* of it. We often *think* ourſelves *ſincere,* when the ſucceſs of the next *temptation* gives us juſt reaſon to call this *ſincerity* into *queſtion*; ſuch is the contradictious *compoſition* of our nature, that we often act contrary to our inward *convictions,* and frequently fail in the *execution* of thoſe *deſigns,* in the *performance* of thoſe *reſolutions,* which we have *thought* very well *grounded*; and this being not to be charged upon the inſufficiency of God's *grace,* but

the levity or insincerity of our own *hearts*, how can we *safely* frame any *right* opinion of our *selves* from those *affections* and *purposes*, which are so little to be *relied* upon? To this I *answer: First*, We are not to conclude any thing concerning our *progress* or *perfection* too *hastily*; we are not to determine of the final *issue* of a *war* by the *success* of *one* or *two* engagements; but our *hopes* and *assurances* are to advance slowly and gradually in *proportion* to the *abatement* of the *enemy*'s force, and the *increase* of our *own*; so that we may have *time* enough to *examine* and *prove* our own hearts. *Secondly*, A *sincere* Christian, but especially one of a *mature* virtue, may easily *discern* his spiritual state, by the inward *movings* and *actings* of the soul, if he *attend* to them: for it is impossible that such a one should be *ignorant*, what *impressions* divine *truths* make upon him. Is it possible he should be *ignorant*, whether his *faith* stands firm against the shock of all *carnal objections*; whether he earnestly desire to please *God*, as loving him above all things; whether he thirst after the consolation and joy of the *Spirit*, more than after that of *sensible* things? Is it possible the soul should *bewail* its *heaviness* and *dryness*, which the best are liable to at some season or other? Is it possible that the soul should be *carried* upwards frequently on the wings of *faith* and

and *love*, that it ſhould maintain a familiar and conſtant *converſation* with *heaven*, that it ſhould *long* to be *delivered* from this *world* of trouble, and this *body* of *death*, and to *enter* into the *regions* of peace, of life, and righteouſneſs? Is it poſſible, I ſay, that *theſe* ſhould be the *affections*, the *longings* and *yearnings* of the ſoul; and yet that the *good* man, the *perfect* man, who often *enters* into his *cloſet*, and *communes* with his own *heart*, ſhould be *ignorant* of them? It *cannot* be. In a *word*, can the reluctances of the *body*, and the allurements of the *world*, be diſarmed, weakened, and reduced? Can the hunger and thirſt after *righteouſneſs* be very eager, the reliſh of *ſpiritual* pleaſure briſk and delightful, and the contempt of *worldly* things be really and thoroughly ſettled, and yet the man be *inſenſible* of all this? It *cannot* be. But if we feel *theſe* affections in us, we may ſafely conclude, that we *are partakers of the Divine Nature*; that *we have eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt*; and that *the new creature* is at leaſt *growing* up into a *perfect man, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*. *Thirdly*, The ſureſt *teſt* of a ſtate of grace, is our *abounding* in *good works*: *you ſhall know the tree by its fruit*, is our *Maſter*'s own rule, and it can never deceive us: *He that doth righteouſneſs is born of God*. If then we be frequent and fervent in our

devotion towards *God*; if we be modeſt and grateful in the *ſucceſſes*, patient and reſigned, calm and ſerene under the *croſſes* and *troubles* of life; if we be not only *punctual*, but *honourable* in our dealings; if we be *vigorous* and *generous* in the exerciſes of *charity*; if we be not only juſt and true, but meek, gentle and obliging in our *words*; if we retrench not only the *ſinful*, but *ſomething* from the *innocent* liberties and gratifications of *ſenſe*, to give our ſelves more *intirely* up to the duties and pleaſures of *faith*: if, finally, we never be aſhamed of virtue, nor flatter, compliment, nor wink at vice; if we be ready to meet *death* with comfort, and retain *life* with ſome degree of indifference: if *theſe* things, I ſay, be in us, we have *little* reaſon to *doubt* of the *goodneſs* of our *ſtate*: for *good works* being the natural fruit of *grace*, it is impoſſible we ſhould abound in the *one* without being poſſeſſed with the *other*. One would think now, that there ſhould be nothing further needful to eſtabliſh the *conſolation* of a *Chriſtian*; and yet *God*, out of regard, no doubt, to the vaſt *importance* and happy *influence* of *aſſurance*, has furniſhed us with *another* ground of it, which is,

The 3*d* and *laſt*, namely, the teſtimony of the *Spirit*. This Spirit, as it *aſſiſts* us in our *examination*, ſo it *ratifies* and *confirms* our ſentence by its *ſuffrage*, *fortifying* our *aſſurance*,

aſſurance, and *increaſing* our *joy*. All this the *ſcripture* expreſly teaches us; for the Spirit is called, *The earneſt of our inheritance, the ſeal of our redemption*, Eph. i. 13, 14. Eph. iv. 30, 31. 2 Cor. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. And though it be not improbable, but that theſe, and ſuch like places, may relate more *immediately* to the *ſpirit* of *promiſe* which was conſpicuous in *miracles*, and ſeems to have accompanied *all* that believed in the *infancy* of the *Church*, according to thoſe words of our Saviour, *And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; in my name they ſhall caſt out devils*, &c. *Mark* xvi. 17. Yet there are texts enough which aſſure us, that the Spirit of God ſhould be imparted to believers through all ſucceeding ages, and that this ſhould be one effect of it to comfort us, and be a pledge to us of the divine favour: thus, *Rom.* xv. 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.* And Rom. viii. 15, 16. *For ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father; the Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt.* If it be here demanded, *what* this *teſtimony of* the *Spirit*

is: I answer, 'tis a powerful *energy* of *the* blessed Spirit, *shedding abroad* and increasing *the love of God in our hearts*, Rom. v. *Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope, and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. This* is the *spirit* of *adoption*, the spirit of *obsignation*, the spirit of *glory*, and the spirit of *love*; happy is he who is partaker of it, he has attained the maturity of *Perfection* and *pleasure*. I can scarce forbear going in with some of the *fathers*, who thought that such as these could never finally fall. I can scarce forbear applying to such, those words, *Rev.* xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power.* Thus far I have considered *assurance* as it relates to the *present* time. But,

2. *Assurance* may regard the *time to come*; and it conduces very little less to the *peace* and *pleasure* of a *Christian* to be *assured* that he shall *persevere* in a good state, than that he is *now* in one. Let us therefore in the *next* place examine what *grounds* the *perfect* man may have for such a persuasion: Now these are likewise *three*.

First, The *propension* and *favour* of *God* for the *perfect* man.

Secondly,

Secondly, The *ſufficiency* of divine *aſſiſtance*.
And,
Thirdly, The *conſcience* of his own *integrity*.

1. The *favour* of *God*. I need not go about to prove that *God* will be ever ready to *aſſiſt* the *perfect* man; I need not prove that *his eyes are always upon the righteous, and that his ears are always open to their prayers*: that *they* are the dear objects of his *delight* and *love*: *reaſon* and *ſcripture* both do abundantly *atteſt* this, and the repeated *promiſes* of *God* to *good* men, encourage them to *hope* from God whatever beloved *children* may from a tender and kind *father*. Is not *this* enough then to inſpire the *perfect* man with great and confident *hopes*? He knows, not only, that *God* is an *immutable God*, free from all levity and inconſtancy; and therefore, that nothing leſs than preſumption and obſtinacy, habitual neglect or wickedneſs, can tempt him to recall his gifts, or repent him of his favours: he knows not only that God is *faithful, and will not ſuffer him to be tempted above what he is able*; but he knows alſo, that he has a powerful *Interceſſor* at the *right-hand* of *God*, an *Advocate* with the *Father*, who cannot but prevail. Nor is this all yet; yet he has a great *many* things that *plead* for him with *God*: there are his

tears which are *bottled* up; there are his *prayers* and *alms* which are gone up for a *memorial* before God; there is a *book of remembrance* written, wherein all his pious diſcourſes are regiſtred; and God is faithful, and cannot forget his *works*, and *labour of love*. The *Spirit* of *God* will not ſoon *quit* the *boſom* that it ſo long *reſided* in: it will not ſuffer itſelf to be *divided* from that perſon, with whom it had entered into ſo cloſe an *union*, that it ſeemed as it were inanimated or incorporated with him, and become eſſential to his Being: whence it is that the *ſpirit* is ſaid *to be grieved* when he is forced and compelled to retire.

2. The *ſecond* ground of *aſſurance* for the *time to come*, is the *ſufficiency* of *divine aſſiſtance*. The good man is well *aſſured*, that God will never refuſe the protection of his *Providence*, or the aid of his *Spirit*: and *what* can be too *difficult* for *ſuch a one? Providence* can prevent a temptation, or remove it; the *Spirit* can ſupport him under it, and enable him to vanquiſh it; nay, it can enable him to extract new *ſtrength* and *vigour* from it; *my grace is ſufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. the truth of which aſſertion has been illuſtriouſly proved by the victories of *martyrs* and *confeſſors*, who *triumphed* over the united force of *men* and *devils*. Tho' then the *conſcience* of human

frailty

frailty may awaken in the beſt of men *fear* and *caution*, the *aſſurance* of *divine aſſiſtance* cannot but beget in them an holy *confidence*; the ſnares and temptations of the *world*, the ſubtilty and vigilance of the *devil may* juſtly create a *ſollicitude* in the beſt of men; but when they conſider themſelves encompaſſed with the *divine favour*, they can have no reaſon to *deſpond*.

3. The *conſcience* of his own *integrity* is a *third* ground of a good man's *confidence*; he knows that nothing but *crying* provocations can *quench* the ſpirit, and oblige *God* to *deſert* him; and he has reaſon to hope, that *this* is that he *cannot* be *guilty* of. He is ſure, that *preſumptuous* wickedneſs is not only repugnant to his *principles*; but to the very bent of his *nature*, to all the *inclinations* and *paſſions* of his ſoul: I ſpeak here of the *perfect* man; can *he* ever wilfully diſhonour and diſobey *God*, who loves him above all things, and has done ſo *long*? Can he forſake, and betray his *Saviour*, who has long rejoiced and gloried in him; who has been long accuſtomed to look upon all the glories and ſatisfactions of this life, as dung and droſs in compariſon of him? Can *he*, in one word, ever be ſeduced to renounce and hate *religion*, who has had ſo long an *experience* of the beauty, and of the pleaſure of it? *Good habits*, when they are grown up to *perfection*

and

and *maturity*, ſeem to me as *natural* as 'tis poſſible *evil* ones ſhould be: and if ſo, 'tis no leſs difficult to extirpate the *one* than the *other*. And I think I have the *ſcripture* on my ſide in this opinion: Does the *prophet Jeremy* demand, *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? then may you that are accuſtomed to do evil, learn to do well*, Jer. xiii. 23. St. *John* on the other hand does affirm, *Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God*, 1 John iii. 9. *Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not*, v. 6. *Theſe* are the grounds of *aſſurance* with reſpect to the *time to come*. As to perſonal and peremptory *predeſtination* to life and glory, 'tis at leaſt a *controverted* point, and therefore *unfit* to be laid as the *foundation* of *aſſurance*. But ſuppoſe it were granted, I ſee not which way it can affect our preſent enquiry, ſince the wiſeſt amongſt thoſe who ſtickle *for it, adviſe all to govern* themſelves by the *general* promiſes and threats of the *goſpel*; to look upon fruits of *righteouſneſs* as the only ſolid *proof* of a *ſtate* of *grace*; and if they be under the dominion of any *ſin*, not to preſume upon perſonal *election*, but to look upon themſelves as in a ſtate of *damnation*, till they be recovered out of it by *repentance*. Thus far all ſides agree; and this I think is abundantly enough; for here

here we have room enough for *joy* and *peace*, and for *caution* too: room enough for *confidence*, and for *watchfulneſs* too: the *Romaniſts* indeed, will not allow us to be certain of ſalvation, *certitudine fidei cui non poteſt ſubeſſe falſum*, with ſuch a *certainty* as that with which we entertain an article of *faith*, in which there is no room for *error*; *i. e.* we are not ſo *ſure* that we are in the *favour* of *God*, as we are, or may be, that there *is a God*: We are not ſo *ſure*, that we have a title to the *merits* of *Chriſt*, as we are, or may be, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*. Now if this aſſertion be confined to that *aſſurance* which regards the *time to come*, as it generally is; and do not deny *aſſurance* in *general*, but only certain *degrees* or *meaſures* of it; then there is nothing very *abſurd* or *intolerable* in it. For a *leſs aſſurance* than that which this doctrine excludes, will be *ſufficient* to ſecure the *pleaſure* and *tranquillity* of the *perfect* man. But if this aſſertion be deſigned againſt *that* aſſurance which regards our *preſent* ſtate; *then* I think it is not *ſound*, nor agreeable, either to *reaſon*, *ſcripture*, or *experience*. For *firſt*, the queſtion being about a matter of *fact*, 'tis in vain to argue *that cannot* be, which does appear manifeſtly to *have been*: and certainly they who rejoiced in *Chriſt* with *joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*, were

as fully *perſuaded*, that they were in a ſtate of *grace* and *ſalvation*, as they were that *Jeſus* was *riſen* from the dead. *Secondly*, 'tis *one* thing to balance the *ſtrength* and *degrees* of *aſſurance*; another to balance the *reaſons* of it. For it is very poſſible that *aſſurance* may be ſtronger, where the *reaſon* of it may not be ſo clear and evident as where the *aſſurance* is leſs. Thus for *example*; the evidence of *ſenſe* ſeems to moſt learned men to be ſtronger than that of *faith*: and yet through the aſſiſtance of the *ſpirit*, a man may embrace a truth that depends upon *revelation*, with as much *confidence* and *certainty* as one depending upon *ſenſe*. And ſo it may be in the caſe of *aſſurance*: the *Spirit* of God may by its concurrence raiſe our *aſſurance* as high as he pleaſes; although the *reaſon* on which it be built, ſhould not be *divine* and *infallible*, but merely *moral*, and ſubject at leaſt to a *poſſibility* of error. But *thirdly*, why ſhould not the *certainty* I have concerning my *preſent ſtate*, be as divine and infallible, as that I have concerning an *article* of *faith*? if the *premiſes* be infallible, why ſhould not the *concluſion*? he that *believes and repents is in a ſtate of grace*, is a divine and infallible propoſition: and why may not this other, *I believe and repent*, be equally infallible, though not equally divine?

divine? *What* faith and repentance is, is *revealed*; and therefore there is no room for my being here *miſtaken:* beſides, I am *aſſiſted* and *guided* in the trial of myſelf, by the *Spirit of God.* So that the truth of this propoſition, *I believe and repent*, depends *partly* upon the evidence of *ſenſe*; and I may be as *ſure* of it, as of what I *do* or leave *undone: partly* upon the evidence of *inward ſenſation*, or my *conſciouſneſs* of my own thoughts; and I may be as ſure of it as I can be of what *I love* or *hate*, *rejoice* or *grieve* for: and laſtly, it depends upon the evidence of the *Spirit of God*, which *aſſiſts* me in the *examination* of myſelf according to thoſe characters of faith and repentance, which he hath himſelf revealed. And when I *conclude* from the two former propoſitions, that *I am in a ſtate of grace*, *he* confirms and ratifies my *inference.* And now, let any one tell me, what kind of *certainty* that is, that can be greater than *this?* I have taken this pains to ſet the doctrine of *aſſurance* in a clear light, becauſe it is the great ſpring of the *perfect* man's *comfort* and *pleaſure*, and ſource of his *ſtrength* and *joy.* And this puts me in mind of that *other* fruit of *Perfection*, which in the beginning of this *chapter* I promiſed to inſiſt on, which is,

Its

Its ſubſerviency to our happineſs in this life.

That *happineſs* increaſes in proportion with *Perfection*, cannot be denied; unleſs we will at the ſame time deny the happineſs of a man to exceed *that* of an infant, or the happineſs of an angel *that* of a man. Now *this* truth being of very great importance, and ſerving ſingly inſtead of a thouſand *motives* to *Perfection*, I will conſider it impartially, and as cloſely as I can. *Happineſs* and *pleaſure* are generally thought to be only two words for the ſame thing: nor is this very remote from truth; for let but *pleaſure* be ſolid and laſting, and I cannot ſee what more is wanting to make man *happy*. The beſt way therefore to determine how much *Perfection* contributes to our *happineſs*, is to examine how much it contributes to our *pleaſure*.

If, with the *Epicurean*, we think *indolence* our ſupreme *happineſs*, and define *pleaſure* by the *abſence* of *pain*; then I am ſure the *perfect* man will have the beſt claim to it. *He* ſurely is freeſt from the miſtakes and errors, from the paſſions and follies, that embroil human life: he creates no evil to himſelf, nor provokes any un-

neceſſary danger. His *virtue* effectually *does that*, which *atheiſm* attempts in vain; diſpels the terror of an inviſible power: he needs not drown the voice of conſcience by wine, or noiſe, or the toil of life; it ſpeaks nothing to him, but what is kind and obliging; it is his comforter, not his perſecutor: and as to this world, he reaps that ſatisfaction and tranquillity from the *moderation* of his affections, which *ambition* and *avarice* do in vain promiſe themſelves from *preferments*, or the *increaſe* of *wealth*. If therefore there were *any* ſtate on this ſide heaven exempt from *evil*, it muſt be *that* of the *perfect* man. But he knows the world too well to flatter himſelf with the expectation of *indolence*, or an *undiſturbed tranquillity* here *below*; and is as far from being *deluded* by vain *hopes*, as from being ſcared by vain *fears*, or tortured and diſtended by vain *deſires*. He *knows* the world has its *evils*, and that they cannot wholly be *avoided*; he *knows it*, and dares *behold* them with open eyes, *ſurvey* their force, and *feel* and *try* their edge. And then, when he has collected his *own* ſtrength, and called in the *aid* of heaven, he *ſhrinks* not, nor *deſponds*; but *meets* evil with that *courage*, and *bears* it with that *evenneſs* of mind, that *he* ſeems, even in his *affliction*, nearer to *indolence*, than

than the *fool* and *ſinner* in his *proſperity*. So that I cannot forbear profeſſing, there appears ſo much *beauty*, ſo much *lovelineſs* in the deportment of the *perfect* man, with reſpect to the *evils* of *life*, that for *that* reaſon alone, were there no *other*, I ſhould admire and prefer his *virtue* above any *poſſeſſion* or *enjoyment* of life. Give me leave to *compare* the ſaint and ſinner on this occaſion; and but very briefly: *The wiſe man's eye*, ſaith *Solomon*, Eccleſ. ii. 14. *are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkneſs.* The wiſe man ſees that he has enemies, I mean evils; and therefore he informs himſelf well of their ſtrength, obſerves their motion, and prepares for the encounter: but ignorance and ſtupidity is the greateſt bleſſing of the ſinner's life; and his moſt admired quality is not to be apprehenſive of evil, till it cruſh him with its weight. But if the ſinner be not *fool* enough to arrive at this degree of *brutality*; then as ſoon as the report of the moſt diſtant evil, or the moſt inconſiderable, reaches his ear, *how* it fills his imagination, how it ſhakes his heart, and how it embitters his pleaſures! and to what poor and deſpicable arts, to what baſe and diſhonourable ſhifts does his *fear* force him! when on the ſame occaſion we diſcover nothing in the *perfect* man, but a beautiful mixture of humi-

humility and faith, devotion and confidence or aſſurance in God; *He is not afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord,* Pſal. cxii. a frame of ſpirit, which, to thoſe who have opportunity and ſenſe to obſerve it, renders him both more *beloved* and *revered. Laſtly,* if we conſider the *wicked* and the *good* man, actually under the weight and preſſure of *evil,* how much *unlike* is the ſtate of the *one* in reality to *that* of the *other,* even while the *outward* circumſtances are the ſame? What chearfulneſs, what courage, what reſignation, what hopes adorn the *one!* what inſtruction to all, what ſatisfaction to his friends and relations does his deportment afford! and how does it inſpire and warm the breaſts of thoſe that converſe with him, with an eſteem for, and love of *goodneſs,* and *himſelf!* what charm, what delight is there in thoſe gracious ſpeeches, that proceed at this time out of a good man's mouth! *I know that my Redeemer liveth: the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, and bleſſed be the name of the Lord: thou of very faithfulneſs haſt cauſed me to be afflicted: God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever:* and ſuch like. And how often does he pour out his heart in ſecret before God! how often does he reflect on the gracious and wiſe ends of divine chaſtiſement! and

how often does he, with desire and thirst, meditate on that fulness of joy which expects him in the presence of God! But let us cast our eye now on the *voluptuary*, on the *ambitious*, on the *covetous*, or any *other* sort of *sinner*, under disgrace, poverty, sickness, or any such calamity; what a mean and despicable figure does such a one make! what impatience, what despondency, what guilt, what pusillanimity does every *word*, every *action* betray! or it may be, his insolence is turned into crouching and fawning; his rudeness and violence, into artifice and cunning; and his irreligion, into superstition. Various indeed are the *humours*, and very different the *carriage* of these unhappy men in the day of *trial*; but all is but *misery* in a *different* dress; *guilt* and *baseness* under a *different* appearance. Here I might further remark, that *that* faith which produces *patience* in *adversity*, produces likewise *security* and *confidence* in *prosperity*. *I will lay me down* (may every good man say in the words of the *Psalmist*) *and sleep, and rise again, for thou, Lord, shalt make me dwell in safety*. And surely the *one* is as serviceable to the ease of human life as the *other*. But I think I have said enough to shew, that if *pleasure* be supposed to imply no more than *indolence*, the *perfect* man has without controversy a far *greater*

share

ſhare of it than any *other* can pretend to.

But let us take *pleaſure* to be, not a mere *calm*, but a gentle *breeze*; not to conſiſt in mere *reſt* and *quiet*, but a delightful *motion*; not in the mere *tranquillity* of the mind, but in the *tranſport* of it, or ſomething *nearly* approaching it. *Perfection*, I am confident, will ſuffer nothing by this change of the notion of *pleaſure*. How many *pleaſures* has the *wiſe* man, which depend not on *fortune*, but *himſelf*, (I mean his diligence and integrity) and to which the *ſinner* is an utter *ſtranger!* What pleaſure, what triumph is equal to that of the *perfect* man, when he *glories* in *God*, and makes his *boaſt* of him all day long? when he *rejoices* in the Lord with joy *unſpeakable and full of glory?* when being filled with all the *fulneſs of God*, *tranſported* by a vital ſenſe of *divine* love, and *ſtrengthened* and *exalted* by the mighty energy of the *ſpirit* of *adoption*, he maintains a *fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus?* All communion with God conſiſts in this joy of *love* and *aſſurance*, and has a taſte of *heaven* in it. Let the moſt *fortunate*, and the *wiſeſt Epicurean* too, ranſack all the ſtore-houſes and treaſures of *nature*; let him muſter together all his legions of *pleaſure*, and let him, if he can, conſolidate and incorporate

them all; and after all, being put into the ſcale againſt *this* alone, they will prove lighter than vanity itſelf. To be the care, the delight, the love of an *Almighty God*, to be dear to *him* who is the *origin* and *fountain* of all *Perfection*; Lord, what reſt, what confidence, what joy, what extaſy do theſe thoughts breed! how ſublime, how lofty, how delightful and raviſhing are thoſe expreſſions of St. *John!* 1 Epiſt. iii. 1, 2. *Behold what manner of love the Father has beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* And thoſe again of the *Pſalmiſt*, *I am continually with thee; thou doſt hold me by my right hand: thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me into glory*, Pſal. lxxii. 23, 24. But I will deſcend to *cooler* and *humbler* pleaſures. It is no ſmall happineſs to the *perfect* man, that he is *himſelf* a proper object of his own *complacency*. He can reflect on the truth and juſtice, the courage and conſtancy, the meekneſs and charity of his ſoul, with much *gratitude* towards *God*, and *contentment* in *himſelf*. And *this* ſurely he may do with good *reaſon*:

For

For the *Perfections* of the *mind* are as juſtly to be preferred before thoſe of the *body*, as thoſe of the *body* before the *gifts* of *fortune*. Nor is it a matter of *ſmall* importance to be *pleaſed* with one's *ſelf*: for grant any one but *this*, and he can never be very *uneaſy*, or very *miſerable*. But *without* this there are very few things which will not diſturb and diſcompoſe; and the moſt obliging accidents of life will have no reliſh in them. 'Tis true, *folly* and *vanity* does ſometimes create a *ſelf-complacency* in the ſinner; why, even *then*, 'tis a *pleaſing error*. But there is as much difference between the *juſt* and *rational* complacency of a *wiſe* man in himſelf, and the *miſtaken* one of a *fool*, as there is between the falſe and fleeting fancies of a dream, and the ſolid ſatisfactions of the day. This will be very manifeſt upon the *ſlighteſt* view we can take of *thoſe* actions, which are the true *reaſon* of the good man's *ſatisfaction* in himſelf, and render his conſcience a continual *feaſt* to him.

It is commonly ſaid, that *virtue* is its *own* reward: and though it muſt be acknowledged, this is a *reward* which is not ſufficient in *all* caſes, nor great enough to vanquiſh *ſome* ſorts of *temptations*; yet there is a great deal of *truth* and *weight* in this ſaying. For a ſtate of virtue is like a ſtate of health or peace, of ſtrength and beauty;

and therefore deſireable on its *own* account. And if *pleaſure*, properly ſpeaking, be nothing elſe but the *agreeable exerciſe of the powers of nature about their proper objects*; and if it be *then* abſolute and compleat, when theſe *powers* are *raiſed*, and the *exerciſe* of them is *free* and *undiſturbed*, then certainly *virtue*, which is nothing elſe but the *perfect* action of a *perfect* nature, as far as the *one* and the *other* may be admitted in this ſtate of *mortality*, muſt be a very conſiderable *pleaſure*. Acts of wiſdom and charity, the contemplation of truth, and the love of goodneſs, muſt be the moſt *natural* and *delightful* exerciſe of the mind of man: and becauſe *truth* and *goodneſs* are *infinite* and *omnipreſent*, and nothing can hinder the *perfect* man from *contemplating* the one, and *loving* the other; therefore does he in his degree and meaſure participate of his *ſelf-ſufficiency*, as he does of *other* Perfections of *God*; and enjoys within *himſelf* an inexhauſtible ſpring of *delight*. How many, how various are the exerciſes and employments of the mind of man! and when it is once poliſhed and cultivated, how agreeable are they all! to invent and find out, to illuſtrate and adorn, to prove and demonſtrate, to weigh, diſcriminate and diſtinguiſh, to deliberate calmly and impartially, to act with an abſolute liberty, to deſpiſe

little

little things, and look boldly on dangers; to do all things dexterously, to converse with a *sweet* and yet a *manly* air, in *honest* and *open*, yet *taking*, *obliging* language! how delightful are these things in themselves! how much do they conduce to the service, the beauty, and dignity of human life! to these *accomplished* minds we owe histories, sciences, arts, trades, laws. From all which if *others* reap an unspeakable *pleasure*, how much more the *authors*, the *parents* of them? And all this puts me in mind of *one* great *advantage* which the *perfect* man enjoys above the most *fortunate* sensualists; which is, that he can never want an *opportunity* to employ all the *vigour* of his mind, *usefully* and *delightfully*. Whence it is, that *retirement*, which is the *prison* and the *punishment* of the *fool*, is the *paradise* of the *wise* and *good*.

But let us come at length to *that* pleasure which depends upon *external* objects; where, if any where, the *fool* and *sinner* must dispute his title to *pleasure* with the *wise* and *good*. How many things are there here which force us to give the preference to the *wise* man? I will not urge, that a *narrow*, a *private* fortune can furnish store *enough* for all the *appetites* of *virtue*; that a *wise* man need not at any time purchase his *pleasure*, at too *dear* a rate; he need not lie, nor

cheat, nor crouch, nor fawn: *this* is the price of *ſinful* pleaſure. I will not, I ſay, urge *theſe* and the *like* advantages, ſince the world thinks it want of *ſpirit* to be *content* with a *little*; and want of *wit* not to practiſe thoſe *arts*, let them be never ſo *baſe*, by which we may compaſs *more*. I'll only remark theſe few things. *Firſt*, the *wiſe* man's *proſpect* is enlarged. He is like an artiſt or philoſopher, which diſcovers a *thouſand* pleaſures and beauties in a *piece*, wherein the *ideot* can ſee *none*: he ſees in all the works, in all the providences of *God*, thoſe *depths*, thoſe *contrivances*, which the *fool* cannot *fathom*; that *order*, that *harmony*, which the *ſinner* is *inſenſible* of. *Next*, The pleaſure of *ſenſe*, that is not refined by *virtue*, leaves a *ſtain* upon the mind: 'tis *coarſe* and *turbulent*, *empty* and *vexatious*. The *pleaſure* of *virtue* is like a *ſtream*, which runs indeed *within* its banks, but it runs *ſmooth* and *clear*; and has a *ſpring* that always *feeds* the current: but the pleaſure of *ſin* is like a *land-flood*, impetuous, muddy, and irregular: and as ſoon as it *forſakes* the ground it overflows, it leaves nothing behind it, but *ſlime* and *filth*. Laſtly, The *wiſe* man forming a true *eſtimate* of the objects of *ſenſe*, and not looking upon them as his *ultimate* end, *enjoys* all that is in them, and is not fooled by an *expectation* of more.

Thus

Thus having conſidered the *objects* of human *pleaſure*, *two* things are plain: *Firſt*, That the *perfect* man has *many* ſources or fountains of *pleaſure*, which the *ſinner* never taſtes of, which he cannot reliſh, which he is a ſtranger to: *Next*, As to *outward* things, that *he* has even here, many advantages above the *other*. But what is more *conſiderable* yet, is,

All the claim the *ſinner* lays to *pleaſure*, is confined to the *preſent* moment, which is extremely *ſhort*, and extremely *uncertain*; the *time* that is *paſt* and to *come*, he *quits* all pretenſions to, or *ought* to do ſo. As to the time *paſt*, the thing is *ſelf-evident:* for the *ſinner*, looking back, ſees his *pleaſures* and *ſatisfactions*; the *good man* his *trials* and *temptations* paſt and gone: the *ſinner* ſees an *end* of his *beauty* and his *ſtrength*; the *good man* of his *weakneſſes* and *follies:* the *one* when he looks back is encountered with *ſin* and *folly*, *wickedneſs* and *ſhame*; the *other* with *repentance* and *good works: guilt* and *fear* haunt the reflections of the *one*, *peace* and *hope* attend thoſe of the *other*. As to the *time to come*, the *atheiſt* hath *no proſpect* at all *beyond* the *grave*, the *wicked* Chriſtian a very *diſmal* one, the *weak* and *imperfect* a *doubtful* one; only the *wiſe* and *perfect* an *aſſured*, *joyful*, and *delightful* one. And this puts me in mind of *that* which

which is the proper *fruit of Perfection*, and the trueſt and greateſt *pleaſure* of human *life*, that is, *aſſurance*, aſſurance of the *pardon* of *ſin*, aſſurance of the *divine favour*, aſſurances of *immortality* and *glory*.

Need I prove, that *aſſurance* is an unſpeakable *pleaſure*? One would think, that to man, who is daily engaged in a *conflict* with ſome *evil* or other, it were ſuperfluous to prove that it is a mighty *pleaſure* to be raiſed, though *not* above the *aſſault*, though not above the *reach*, yet above the *venom* and *malignity* of *evils*: to be *filled* with joy, and ſtrength, and confidence; to ride *triumphant* under the protection of the *divine favour*, and ſee the ſea of life ſwell and toſs itſelf in vain, *in vain threaten the* bark it *cannot ſink*, *in vain invade* the cable it *cannot burſt*. One would think, that to man, who lives all his life long in *bondage* for fear of *death*, it ſhould be a ſurprizing *delight* to ſee *death* lie *gaſping* at his feet, naked and impotent, without *ſting*, without *terror*: one would, finally, think, that to man, who lives rather by *hope* than *enjoyment*, it ſhould not be neceſſary to prove, that the *Chriſtian's hope*, whoſe confidence is greater, its objects more glorious, and its ſucceſs more certain than *that* of any worldly fancy or project, is full of *pleaſure*; and that it is a *delightful* proſpect to ſee the

the *heavens* opened, and *Jesus*, our *Jesus*, our *Prince* and *Saviour*, sitting at the *right* hand of *God*.

Thus I have, I think, sufficiently made out the subserviency of *Perfection* to the *happiness* of this *present* life, which was the thing proposed to be done in this *chapter*. Nor can I imagine what *objections* can be sprung to invalidate what I have said; unless there be any thing of colour in these *two*.

1. To reap the *pleasure*, will some one say, which you have described here, it requires something of an *exalted* genius, some *compass* of understanding, some *sagacity* and *penetration*. To this I *answer*, *I grant* indeed that some of those *pleasures* which I have reckoned up as belonging to the *perfect* man, demand a spirit *raised* a little above the *vulgar*: but the *richest* pleasures, *not* the most *polished* and *elevated* spirits, but the most *devout* and *charitable* souls are *best* capable of. *Such* are the *peace* and *tranquillity* which arises from the *conquest* and *reduction* of all inordinate affections: the *satisfaction* which accompanies a sincere and vigorous *discharge* of *duty*, and our *reflections* upon it; the *security* and *rest* which flows from *self-resignation*, and *confidence* in the *divine* protection: and lastly, the joy that springs from the *full* assurance of *hope*.

But,

But, 2*dly*, It may be objected, 'tis true all these things seem to hang together well enough in *speculation*; but when we come to examine the matter of *fact*, we are almost tempted to think, that all which you have said to prove *the ways of wisdom ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace*, amounts to no more than a pretty *amusement* of the mind, and a *visionary* scheme of happiness. For how *few* are there, if *any*, who *feel* all this to be truth, and *experiment* the *pleasure* you talk of? How *few* are they in whom we can discover any signs of this spiritual *joy*, or *fruits* of a divine *tranquillity* or *security*? I *answer*, in a word, the examples of a *perfect* and *mature* virtue are very *few*; *religion* runs very *low*, and the *love* of *God* and *goodness* in the bosoms of *most Christians* suffers such an *allay* and *mixture*, that it is *no* wonder at all, if so *imperfect* a *state* breed but very *weak* and *imperfect hopes*, very *faint* and *doubtful joys*. But I shall have occasion to *examine* the force of this *objection* more *fully*, when I come to the *obstacles* of *Perfection*.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the attainment of Perfection: with a particular account of the manner, or the ſeveral ſteps, by which man advances or grows up to it: with three remarks *to make this diſcourſe more uſeful, and to free it from ſome ſcruples.*

I Have in the *firſt*, *ſecond*, and *third* chapters explained the *notion* of *Religious Perfection*. In the *fourth* chapter I have inſiſted on *two effects* of it, *aſſurance* and *pleaſure*: my method therefore now leads me to the *attainment* of *Perfection*. Here I will do *two* things. 1*ſt*, I will trace out the ſeveral *ſteps* and *advances* of the Chriſtian towards it, and draw up, as it were, a ſhort hiſtory of his ſpiritual *progreſs*, from the very infancy of virtue to its maturity and manhood. 2*dly*, I will diſcourſe briefly of the *motives* and *means* of *Perfection*.

Of the Chriſtian's progreſs *towards* Perfection.

Many are the figures and metaphors by which the ſcripture deſcribes this; alluding *one* while to the formation, nouriſhment and growth of the natural man; *another* while to that of plants and vegetables: *one* while

while to the dawning and encreaſing light that ſhines more and more to the perfect day. *Another* while to that ſucceſſion of labours and expectations which the huſbandman runs through from ploughing to the harveſt. But of all the ſimiles which the ſpirit makes uſe of to this end, there is *one* eſpecially that ſeems to me to give us the trueſt, and the livelieſt image of the change of a ſinner into a ſaint. The ſcripture repreſents *ſin* as a ſtate of *bondage*, and *righteouſneſs* as a ſtate of *liberty*; and teaches us, that by the ſame ſteps by which an enſlaved and oppreſſed people arrive at their ſecular, by the very ſame does the Chriſtian at his ſpiritual liberty and happineſs.

Firſt, then, as ſoon as any judgment or mercy, or any other ſort of call, awakens and penetrates the ſinner; as ſoon as a clear light breaks in upon him, and makes him ſee and conſider his own ſtate, he is preſently agitated by various paſſions, according to his different guilt and temper, or the different calls and motives by which he is wrought upon: one while fear, another while ſhame; one while indignation, another while hope, fills his ſoul: he reſents the tyranny, and complains of the perſecution of his luſts; he upbraids himſelf with his folly, and diſcovers a meanneſs and ſhameſulneſs in his vices, which he did

not

not reflect on ſufficiently before; he is vexed and troubled at the plagues and miſchiefs his ſin and folly have already procured him, and thinks he has reaſon to fear, if he perſiſt, others far more intolerable. *Then* he calls to mind the goodneſs, the long-ſuffering of *God*, the love of *Jeſus*, the *demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power*; and how diſtant ſoever he be from virtue, he diſcerns there is a beauty and pleaſure in it; and cannot but judge the righteous happy. *Theſe* thoughts, theſe travels of the mind, if they be not ſtrangled in the birth by a man's own wilfulneſs or puſillanimity, or unhappily diverted upon ſome temptations, do kindle in the boſom of the ſinner, the deſires of righteouſneſs and *liberty*; they fill him with regret and ſhame, caſt him down, and humble him before God, and make him finally reſolve on ſhaking off the yoke. This may be called a ſtate of *illumination*; and is a ſtate of *preparation* for, or *diſpoſition* to *repentance*: or, if it be *repentance* itſelf, 'tis yet but an *embryo*: to *perfect* it, 'tis neceſſary,

Secondly, that the ſinner make good his reſolutions, and actually break with his luſts; he muſt reject their ſollicitations, and boldly oppoſe their commands; he muſt take part with reaſon and religion, keep a watch and guard over his ſoul, and muſt

earneſtly labour by mortification and diſcipline, by meditation and prayer, to root out vice and plant virtue in his ſoul. This in the language of the prophet is *ceaſing to do evil and learning to do well*, Iſai. i. 16, 17. He that has proceeded thus far, tho' he feel a great conflict within; though the oppoſition of luſt be very ſtrong, and conſequently the diſcharge of his duty very difficult, he is nevertheleſs in a ſtate of *grace*, but in a ſtate of *childhood* too; he is *ſincere*, but far from being *perfect*. And yet *this* is the ſtate which many continue in to the end of their lives, being partly abuſed by falſe notions, and taught to believe, from *Rom.* vii. that there is no higher or perfecter ſtate; partly intangled and incumbered by ſome unhappy circumſtances of life: or, it may be, the force or *impetus* of the ſoul towards *Perfection*, is much abated by the ſatisfaction of proſperity, and the many diverſions and engagements of a fortunate life: but he that will be *perfect*, muſt look upon this ſtate as the beginning of virtue. For it muſt be remembered, that a ſtubborn and powerful enemy will not be ſubdued and totally brought under in a moment. The Chriſtian therefore muſt proſecute this war till he has finiſhed it; I will not ſay by extir-

extirpating, but disabling the enemy. But here I would have it well observed, that the reducing the enemy to a low condition, is not always effected by an uninterrupted series of *victories*; for seldom is any so fortunate, or so brave, so wise, or so watchful, as to meet with no check in the long course of a difficult war; 'tis enough if he be not discouraged, but instructed and awakened by it. And to prevent any fatal disaster, two errors must carefully be avoided. *First*, A hasty and fond confidence in ourselves, with an over-weeing contempt and neglect of the enemy; and *next*, all false and cowardly projects of truces and accommodations: nor is the sitting down content with poor and low attainments very far removed from this latter. *This* is the *second* stage of the Christian's advance toward *Perfection*; and may be called the state of *liberty*. The *third* and last, which now follows, is the state of *zeal*, or *love*, or, as *mystic* writers delight to call it, the state of *union*.

The yoke of sin being once shaken off, the love of righteousness, and a delight in it, is more and more increased: and *now* the man proceeds to the *last* round in the scale of *Perfection*. The wisdom, courage, and vigour of a convert, is generally at first employed in subduing his corruptions, in conquering his ill habits, and defeating

his enemies; in watching over his own heart, and guarding himſelf againſt temptations. But this being once done, he is in full *liberty* to purſue the works of peace and love. Now he may advance from *neceſſary* to *voluntary* acts of ſelf-denial, which before would have been *putting new wine into old bottles*, contrary to the advice of our *Maſter*, Mat. ix. 17. Now he may enlarge his knowledge, and exchange the *milk of the word for ſtrong meat*, for the wiſdom and the myſteries of it: now he may extend his watchfulneſs, his care; and whereas they were before wiſely, for the moſt part, confined to his own ſafety, he may now, like our Saviour, *go about doing good*, Acts x. 38. protecting, ſtrengthning, and reſcuing his weak brethren; propagating the faith, and inflaming the boſoms of men with the love of *Jeſus* and his truth. Now, in a word, he may give himſelf up to a life of more exalted contemplation, purity and charity, which will be natural and eaſy now, though it were not ſo in the beginning. And this life is accompanied with *peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; with confidence and pleaſure: now the *yoke of Chriſt is eaſy, and his burden light*; now *he rejoices with joy unſpeakable, and hopes full of glory*. Now 'tis not ſo much *he that lives, as Chriſt that lives in him:* For the *life which he now leads*, is intirely

intirely the product of faith and love; and his greateſt buſineſs is to maintain the ground which he has got, and to hold faſt the ſtedfaſtneſs of his hope unto the end.

To render this ſhort account of the growth of virtue, from its very ſeed to maturity, the more *uſeful*, and to free it from ſome *ſcruples*, which it may otherwiſe give occaſion to; I will here add *two* or *three* remarks. 1. That the ſtate and habit of *perfection* is a different thing from ſome ſudden flights, or efforts of an extraordinary *paſſion*; and ſo is the fixt and eſtabliſhed tranquillity of the mind, from ſome ſudden guſts, and ſhort-liv'd fits of ſpiritual joy. No man attains to the habits of virtue and pleaſure but by degrees; and the natural method and order by which he advances to *either*, is that which I have ſet down. But as to ſome ſallies of the moſt pure and exalted paſſions; as to ſhort-liv'd fits of *perfection*, as to tranſient taſtes, ſhort and ſudden tranſports of ſpiritual pleaſure, it is very often otherwiſe. God ſometimes, either to allure the frailty of a new convert, or to fortify his reſolution againſt ſome hazardous trial, does raiſe him to an extraordinary height, by more than uſual communications of his bleſſed Spirit; and raviſhes him by ſome glance, as it were, of the beatifick viſion.

Raptures of love, the melting tenderneſs of a pious ſorrow, the ſtrength of reſolution and faith, the confidence and exultancy of aſſurance, do ſometimes accompany ſome ſort of Chriſtians in the beginnings of righteouſneſs, or in the ſtate of *illumination*. Where the conviction is full, the imagination lively, and the paſſions tender, it is more eaſy to *gain Perfection*, than to *preſerve* it. When a profligate ſinner in the *day of God's power* is ſnatched like a firebrand out of the fire, reſcued by ſome amazing and ſurprizing call, like *Iſrael* by miracles out of *Egypt*; I wonder not, if ſuch a one *loves much*, becauſe *much has been forgiven him*; I wonder not, if he be ſwallowed up by the deepeſt and the livelieſt ſenſe of guilt and mercy; I wonder not, if ſuch a one endeavour to repair his paſt crimes by *heroick* acts, if he make haſte to redeem his loſt time by a zeal and vigilance hard to be imitated, never to be parallel'd by others. Hence we read of *Judah's love in the day of her eſpouſals*, Jer. ii. 2. And of the firſt *love of the church of Epheſus*, Rev. ii. 4. as the moſt perfect. And in the firſt times of the goſpel, when men were converted by aſtoniſhing miracles; when the preſence and example of *Jeſus* and his *followers*; when the perſpicuity and authority, the ſpirit and power, the luſtre and ſurprize of

of the *word* of life and ſalvation dazzled, over-powered and tranſported the minds of men, and made a thorough change in a moment; and when again no man profeſſed Chriſtianity, but he expected by his ſufferings and martyrdom to ſeal the truth of his profeſſion; I wonder not, if virtue ripen'd faſt under ſuch miraculous influences of heaven; or if *aſſurance* ſprung up in a moment from theſe bright proofs of an unſhaken integrity. But we who live in colder climates; who behold nothing in ſo clear and bright a light as thoſe happy ſouls did, muſt be content to make ſhorter and ſlower ſteps towards *perfection*, and ſatisfy our ſelves with a natural not miraculous progreſs. And we, whoſe virtues are ſo generally under-grown, and our trials no other than common ones, have no reaſon to expect the joys of a *perfect aſſurance*, till we go on to *Perfection*.

2*dly*, As *Perfection* is a work of time, ſo is it of great expence and coſt too; I mean, 'tis the effect of much labour and travel, ſelf-denial and watchfulneſs, reſolution and conſtancy. Many are the dangers which we are to encounter through our whole progreſs towards it; why elſe are we exhorted, to *learn to do good? To perfect holineſs in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1, 2. *To be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds from day to day*, Eph. iv. 23. *To*

watch, ſtand faſt, to quit us like men, to be ſtrong, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *To take to us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil, and when we have done all, to ſtand*, Eph. vi. 11, 13. *To uſe all diligence to make our calling and election ſure*, 2 Pet. i. 10. and ſuch like? nay, which is very remarkable, theſe and the like exhortations were addreſſed to *Chriſtians* in *theſe* times, which had manifold advantages above theſe of *ours*. If I ſhould ſay, that the ſpirit of God, the ſanctifying grace of God, was then poured forth in more plentiful meaſure than ever after, not only *ſcripture*, as I think, but *reaſon* too, would be on my ſide. The intereſt of the church of Chriſt required it; ſanctity being as neceſſary as miracles to convert the Jew and the Gentile. But beſides this, the then wonderful and ſurprizing light of the goſpel, the preſence of *Jeſus* in the fleſh, or of thoſe who had been eye-witneſſes of his glory; a croud of wondrous works and miracles, the expectation of terrible things, temporal and eternal judgments at the door, and an equal expectation of glorious ones too. All theſe things breaking in, beyond expectation, upon a *Jewiſh* and *Pagan* world, overwhelmed before by thick darkneſs, and whoſe abominations were too notorious to be concealed, and too deteſtable to be excuſed or defended, could not

not but produce a very great and ſudden change. Now therefore, if in theſe times many did ſtart forth in a moment fit for *baptiſm* and *martyrdom*; if many amongſt theſe were ſuddenly changed, juſtified and crowned, I wonder not. *This* was a *day of power*, a *day of glory*, wherein God aſſerted himſelf, exalted his Son, and reſcued the world by *a ſtretched-out hand*. I ſhould not therefore from hence be induced to expect any thing like at *this day*. But yet if, notwithſtanding all this, Chriſtians in thoſe happy times, amidſt ſo many advantages, ſtood in *need* of ſuch exhortations, what do not we in theſe times? if ſo much watchfulneſs, prayer, patience, fear, abſtinence, and earneſt contention became them, when God as it were *bowed the heavens, and came down and dwelt amongſt men*; what becomes us in theſe days, in the dregs of time, when God ſtands as it were aloof off, to ſee what will be our latter end, retired behind a cloud, which our hereſies and infidelities, ſchiſms and diviſions, ſins and provocations have raiſed? To conclude, he that will be *perfect* muſt not ſit like the lame man by *Bethesda*'s pool, expecting till ſome *angel* come to cure him: but, like our *Lord*, he muſt climb the mount, and pray, and then he may be transformed; he may be raiſed as much above the moral corruption of his

nature by *Perfection*, as our Saviour was above the meanneſs and humility of his body, by his glorious *Tranſfiguration*. Theſe *two* obſervations are of manifold uſe. For *many* expect pleaſure when they have no right to it; they would reap, before virtue be grown up and ripen'd; and being more intent upon the fruit of duty, than the diſcharge of it, they are frequently diſappointed and diſcouraged. *Others* there are, who miſtaking ſome fits and flaſhes of ſpiritual joy for the habitual peace and pleaſure of *Perfection*, do entertain too early confidences, and inſtead of *perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*, they decline, or it may be, fall away through negligence and ſecurity: or, which is as bad, the duties of religion grow taſteleſs and inſipid to them for want of that pleaſure which they ignorantly or preſumptuouſly expect ſhould conſtantly attend them: and ſo they are diſheartened or diſguſted, and give back; which they would never do, if they did rightly underſtand, that *Perfection* is a work of time; that a ſettled tranquillity, an habitual joy of ſpirit, is the fruit only of *Perfection*; and that thoſe ſhort gleams of joy, which break in upon new converts, and ſometimes on other imperfect Chriſtians, do depend upon extraordinary circumſtances, or are peculiar favours of heaven. *Laſtly*, there are *many*, who have enter-

entertained very odd fancies about the *attainment* of *Perfection*; they talk and act as if *Perfection* were the product, not of time and experience, but of an inſtant; as if it were to be infuſed in a moment, not acquired; as if it were a mere arbitrary favour, not the fruit of meditation and diſcipline. 'Tis true, it cannot be doubted by a Chriſtian, but that *Perfection* derives itſelf from heaven; and that the ſeed of it is the grace of God: yet it is true too, and can as little be doubted by any one who conſults the goſpel, and the experience of the beſt men, that we muſt watch, and pray, and contend, labour and perſevere, and that long too, ere we can attain it. And whoever fancies himſelf rapt up into the *third heaven* on a ſudden, will find himſelf as ſuddenly let down to the *earth* again; if he do not uſe his utmoſt diligence to fortify his reſolutions, to cheriſh the new-born flame, and to guard and improve his virtues.

3*dly*, It may be objected againſt the account I have given of the *growth* of virtue, that when I come to the maturity of it, my colours are *too* bright, my ſtrokes *too* bold, and the form I have given it *too* divine. For you deſcribe it, will one ſay, as if man, now grown *perfect*, had nothing to do, but to enjoy God and himſelf; as if he were already *entered into reſt*,

and did actually *ſit down with Chriſt in heavenly places*; as if, in a word, *virtue* were no longer his taſk, but *pleaſure*; as if he had nothing to do but to rejoice continually, nothing further to preſs after, nothing to combat, nothing to contend with: whereas the *fathers* generally, and all judicious *modern* writers, ſeem to place *Perfection* in nothing higher, than in a perpetual progreſs towards it; they look upon life as a perpetual warfare, and utterly deny any ſuch height or eminence as is raiſed above clouds and ſtorms, above troubles and temptations. But to *this*, I have *ſeveral* things to ſay, which will *clear* my ſenſe about this matter, and diſpel all *objections*. *Firſt*, I have deſcribed the laſt ſtage of the Chriſtian's ſpiritual progreſs which I call a ſtate of zeal, and in which I ſuppoſe the Chriſtian to commence perfect; this, I ſay, I have deſcribed in the ſame manner, and as near as I could, in the ſame words which the ſcripture does. *Secondly*, I do not pretend any where to aſſert, that there is any ſtate in this life raiſed above trials and temptations. Alas! the moſt *perfect* man will find it work enough to make good the ground he has gained, and maintain the conqueſt he has won; much watchfulneſs and labour, much humility and fear, and many other virtues are neceſſary to perſeverance in a ſtate of *Perfection*.

Perfection. *Thirdly*, As the world now goes, and indeed ever did, *Perfection* is a ſtate we arrive at very *late*; and all the way to it full of labour and travel, full of dangers and difficulties; ſo that upon this account, the life of man may well enough be ſaid to be a perpetual warfare. But, *Fourthly*, I do by no means affirm, that the *perfect* man is incapable of growth and improvement. Of this I ſhall have occaſion to unfold my ſenſe more fully afterwards. In the mean time I cannot forbear obſerving here, that there is a great difference between the growth of an *imperfect* and a *perfect* Chriſtian; for ſuppoſing grace to be always increaſing, and the very maturity of virtue to admit of degrees; yet the marks and diſtinctions of ſuch different degrees are ſo nice and delicate, that the *advances* of the *perfect* man are ſcarcely perceptible to himſelf, without the cloſeſt and ſtricteſt enquiry, much leſs can they fall under the obſervation of others. The *firſt change* of a ſinner from darkneſs to light, from vice to virtue, from an averſion for God and goodneſs, to a *ſincere*, though not a *perfect* love of both, is very palpable: ſo *again*, the change from a ſtate of weakneſs and inconſtancy, to one of ſtrength; of conflict and difficulty, to one of eaſe and liberty; of fear and doubt, to one of confidence and pleaſure, is little

leſs

leſs evident than ſenſible. / *But* the ſeveral degrees of growth *afterwards*, the improvements, whatever they be, of a mature ſtate, are of *another* nature, not conſiſting in a *change*, but *addition*; and that made *inſenſibly*. Here therefore, the *perfect* man, in order to maintain the peace and pleaſure of his mind, need not enter into a nice and ſcrupulous examination of the degrees and meaſures of his virtues; 'tis ſufficient that he make good his poſt; 'tis enough if he follow the advice of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. *If he be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

CHAP. VI.

Of the means *of Perfection. Five general obſervations, ſerving for directions in the uſe of goſpel-means, and* inſtrumental *duties.* 1. *The practice of* wiſdom *and* virtue, *is the beſt way to improve and ſtrengthen both.* 2. *The two general and immediate inſtruments, as of* converſion, *ſo of* Perfection *too, are the* goſpel *and the* ſpirit. 3. *The natural and immediate fruit of* meditation, prayer, euchariſt, pſalmody, *and good* converſation, *or* friendſhip, *is the quickening and enlivening the* conſcience, *the fortifying and confirming*

firming our reſolutions, *and the raiſing and keeping up an* heavenly frame of ſpirit. 4. *The immediate ends of* diſcipline, *are the ſubduing the* pride *of the heart, and the reducing the* appetites *of the body.* 5. *Some kinds of life are better ſuited to the great ends of religion and virtue, than others.*

SHould I inſiſt particularly on every one of the *means* or *inſtruments* of *Perfection*, it would lead me through the whole ſyſtem of religion; it would oblige me to treat of all the articles of our faith, and all the parts of moral righteouſneſs. For the virtues of the goſpel do all afford mutual ſupport and nouriſhment to one another; and mutually miniſter to their own growth and ſtrength. And *prayer* and the *Lord's ſupper*, not to mention *meditation*, *pſalmody*, *converſation*, *diſcipline*, are founded upon the belief of all the myſteries of our religion; and conſiſt in the exerciſe of almoſt all Chriſtian graces, as repentance, faith, hope, charity: but this would be an endleſs taſk. I purpoſe therefore here only to lay down ſome few *general obſervations*, which may ſerve for directions in the uſe of *goſpel-means*, point out the *end* we are to aim at, and enable us to reap the utmoſt *benefit* from them.

§ 1.

§ 1. The *practice* of wiſdom and virtue, is the beſt way to improve and ſtrengthen both. This is a propoſition almoſt ſelf-evident: for beſides that it is acknowledged on all hands, that the frequent repetition of ſingle *acts* of virtue, is the natural way to arrive at an *habit* of it; the *practice* of virtue gives a man great boldneſs towards God, mingles joy and pleaſure in all his addreſſes to him, purifies and enlightens the mind, and entitles him to more plentiful meaſures of grace, and higher degrees of favour. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed; and ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free,* John viii. 31, 32. *To him that hath, ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance,* Matth. xiii. 12. If this be ſo, as undoubtedly it is, it is plain, that we ought not to be fond of ſuch a ſolitude or retirement, as cuts off the opportunity of many virtues, which may be daily practiſed in a more publick and active life. The true *Anchorite*, or *hermite*, was at *firſt* little *better* than a *pious extravagant*: I will not ſay how much *worſe* he is now. Meditation and prayer are excellent duties; but meekneſs and charity, mercy and zeal, are not one jot inferior to them. The *world* is an excellent *ſchool* to a good Chriſtian; the follies

follies and the miſeries, the trials and temptations of it, do not only exerciſe and employ our virtue, but cultivate and improve it: they afford us both *inſtruction* and *diſcipline*, and naturally advance us on towards ſolid wiſdom, and a well-ſettled power over ourſelves. 'Tis our own fault if every accident that befals us, and every one whom we converſe with, do not teach us ſomewhat; occaſion ſome wiſe *reflection*, or inkindle ſome pious *affection* in us. We do not reflect on our words and actions, we do not obſerve the motions of our own hearts as diligently as we ought; we make little or no application of what we ſee or hear, nor learn any thing from the wiſdom and the virtue, the folly and the madneſs of *man*, and the conſequences of both: and ſo we neither improve our *knowledge*, nor our *virtue*, but are the ſame to *day* we were *yeſterday*, and life *waſtes* away in common accidents, and cuſtomary actions, with as little alteration in us, as in our affairs: whereas, were we mindful, as we ought, of our true intereſt, and deſirous to reap ſome ſpiritual benefit from every thing, the virtues of *good* men would inkindle our emulation, and the folly and madneſs of *ſinners* would confirm our abhorrence for ſin; from *one* we ſhould learn content, from *another* induſtry; here we

ſhould

ſhould ſee a charm in meekneſs and charity, *there* in humility; in *this* man we ſhould ſee reaſon to admire diſcretion and command of himſelf; in *that* courage and conſtancy, aſſiduity, and perſeverance: nor would it be leſs uſeful to us, to obſerve, how vanity expoſes *one*, and peeviſhneſs torments *another*; how pride and ambition embroil a *third*; and how hateful and contemptible avarice renders a *fourth*; and to trace all that variety of ruin, which luſt and prodigality, diſorder and ſloth, leave behind them.

And as this kind of obſervations will fill us with ſolid and uſeful *knowledge*, ſo will a diligent attention to the rules of righteouſneſs, and diſcretion in all the common and daily actions of life, enrich us with true *virtue*. *Religion* is not to be confined to the *Church*, and to the *cloſet*, nor to be exerciſed only in *prayers* and *ſacraments*, *meditations* and *alms*; but every-where, we are in the preſence of God, and every word, every action, is capable of *morality*. Our defects and infirmities betray themſelves in the daily accidents and the common converſation of life; and *here* they draw after them very important conſequences; and therefore *here* they are to be watched over, regulated and governed, as well as in our more *ſolemn* actions. 'Tis

to

to the virtues or the errors of our *common* converſation and *ordinary* deportment, that we owe both our friends and enemies, our good or bad character abroad, our domeſtick peace or troubles; and in a high degree, the improvement or depravation of our minds. Let no man then, that will be *perfect* or *happy*, abandon himſelf to his humours or inclinations in his carriage towards his acquaintance, his children, his ſervants: let no man, that will be *perfect* or *happy*, follow *prejudice* or *faſhion* in the common and cuſtomary actions of life: but let him aſſure himſelf, that by a daily endeavour to conform theſe more and more to the excellent rules of the goſpel, he is to train up himſelf by degrees to the moſt abſolute *wiſdom*, and the moſt *perfect* virtue he is capable of. And to this end he muſt firſt know himſelf, and thoſe he has to do with; he muſt diſcern the proper ſeaſon and the juſt occaſion of every virtue; and then he muſt apply himſelf to the acquiring the perfection of it by the daily exerciſe of it, even in thoſe things, which, for want of due reflection, do not commonly ſeem of any great importance. To one that is *thus* diſpoſed, the dulneſs or the careleſſneſs of a ſervant, the ſtubbornneſs of a child, the ſourneſs of a parent, the inconſtancy of friends, the coldneſs of relations, the neglect

or ingratitude of the world, will all prove extremely uſeful and beneficial; every thing will inſtruct him, every thing will afford an opportunity of exerciſing ſome virtue or another; ſo that ſuch a one ſhall be *daily* learning, *daily* growing better and wiſer.

§ 2. The *two* great *inſtruments*, not of *regeneration* only, but alſo of *Perſeverance* and *Perfection*, are the *Word* and the *Spirit* of *God*. This no man doubts that is a Chriſtian; and therefore I will not go about to *prove* it: nor will I at preſent diſcourſe of the energy and operation of the *one*, and the *other*; or examine what each is in its ſelf, or wherein the one differs from the other. 'Tis abundantly enough, if we be aſſured that the *goſpel* and the *Spirit* are proper and ſufficient *means* to attain the great *ends* I have mentioned, namely, our *converſion* and *Perfection*. And that they are ſo, is very plain from thoſe *texts* which do expreſly aſſert, that the *goſpel* contains all thoſe truths that are neceſſary to the clear expoſition of our duty, or to the moving and obliging us to the practice of it. And that the *Spirit* implies a ſupply of all that ſupernatural ſtrength, be it what it will, that is neceſſary to enable us, not only to will, but to do that which the goſpel convinces us to be our duty. *Such*

are, *Rom.* i. 2. *For the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. *All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.* 2 Cor. xii. 9. *And he ſaid unto me, my grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.* 1 Pet. i. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation, ready to be revealed in the laſt time.* 'Tis needleſs to multiply *texts* on this occaſion; otherwiſe it were very eaſy to ſhew, that all things neceſſary to *life and godlineſs*, are contained in the *Word* and *Spirit*; that whatever is neceſſarily to be wrought in us to prepare us for, or entitle us to eternal ſalvation, is aſcribed to the *goſpel* and the *Spirit*. This truth then being unqueſtionable, that the *goſpel* and the *Spirit* are the *two* great *inſtruments* of *Perfection*; we may from hence infer *two rules*, which are of the moſt univerſal uſe, and of the moſt powerful efficacy in the purſuit of *Perfection*. 1. We cannot have too great a value, too great a paſſion for the *Book of God*; nor fix our thoughts and hearts too earneſtly upon the truths

of it. We muſt imitate the *Theſſalonians*, in behalf of whom St. *Paul* thanks God, *becauſe when they received the word of God which they heard of him, they received it not as the word of men; but as it is in truth, the word of God*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. that is, we muſt entertain the *goſpel*, as *that* which has infallible truth in all its doctrines, uncontroulable authority in all its precepts, a divine certainty in all its promiſes and threats, and a divine wiſdom in all its counſels and directions: and *he* that thus believes will certainly find the goſpel to work effectually in *him*, as it did in the *Theſſalonians*. What light and beauty will he diſcern in all its deſcriptions of our duty! what force in all its perſuaſions! what majeſty, what dignity, what life, what power, what conſolation, what ſupport! in one word, what heavenly virtue will he diſcern in each part of it, and what vaſt and unfathomable wiſdom in the whole compoſure and contrivance of it! how will he then admire it, how will he love it, how will he ſtudy it, how will he delight in it! how will he be tranſported by the promiſes, and awed by the threats of it! how will he be pierced and ſtruck through by thoſe exaggerations of ſin, and captivated and enamoured by thoſe lively and divine deſcriptions of virtue he meets in it! how will he adore the goodneſs of

God,

God, conſpicuous in our redemption! how will he be inflamed with the love of *Jeſus*, and be amazed at his condeſcenſion and humility! *this* and much more is the natural effect of our receiving the *goſpel* as we ought, and pondering the truths of it with devout and inceſſant meditation. This the royal *Pſalmiſt* was abundantly ſenſible of, *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee*, Pſal. cxix. 11. *Thou through thy commandments haſt made me wiſer than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more underſtanding than all my teachers: for thy teſtimonies are my meditation*, ver. 98. To which I might add many other *verſes* out of that *Pſalm*, containing the various and mighty *effects* of the *word* of *God*. Nor will any one think that I attribute too much to the ſtudy of this *word of life*, who ſhall conſider that it is one of the great works of the *Holy Spirit*, to *incline our hearts to the teſtimonies of God, to write his laws in our hearts*, to diſpoſe us to attend to revealed truths; and, in one word, to fix our minds and thoughts upon them. 2. Since the *Spirit*, together with the *goſpel*, is a joint principle of *regeneration* and *Perfection*, 'tis manifeſt, that we ought to live in a continual dependance upon God. *He* muſt be our hope and confidence in the *day of trial: He* muſt be our praiſe and boaſt in the *day of victory*,

and in the *day of peace:* when we *lie down* and when we *riſe up*, we muſt ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *'Tis thou, Lord, that makeſt me dwell in ſafety*, Pſal. iv. 8. We muſt look upon ourſelves as ſurrounded by enemies, and beſieged by *ſpiritual* dangers, as *David* was by *temporal:* and as *he* in the one, ſo muſt we in the *other*, expect ſtrength and ſalvation from *him*. *Through God we ſhall do valiantly, for he it is that ſhall tread down our enemies*, Pſal lx. 12. *Many nations compaſs me round about; but in the name of the Lord I will deſtroy them.* And when we have conquered temptations, and routed the powers of darkneſs, we muſt aſcribe all, not to our own ſtrength, nor to our own watchfulneſs, but to the grace and the power of God. *If the Lord himſelf had not been on our ſide, now may Iſrael ſay; if the Lord himſelf had not been on our ſide*, when the legions of hell combined with the world and fleſh againſt us, *they had ſwallowed us up alive*, Pſal. cxxiv. 1, 2, 3. Now, *many* will be the happy *effects* of this dependance upon God; we ſhall be paſſionately deſirous of his preſence, of his grace and favour; we ſhall dreſs and prepare our ſouls, we ſhall awaken and diſpoſe all our faculties to receive him; we ſhall ever do the things that may invite and prevail with him to abide with us; we ſhall be apprehenſive of his forſaking *us*,

as

as the greateſt evil that can befal us. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting doors: and the king of glory ſhall come in:* awake, O my ſoul, raiſe thyſelf above this world and fleſh, that thou mayeſt be fit for the *King of glory* to dwell in thee: *Who is the king of glory? the Lord ſtrong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle*; that Holy Spirit that ſubdues our enemies, that ſtrengthens us with might, and fills us with courage and holy alacrity, *Pſal.* xxiv. 7, 8. Nor does the *Pſalmiſt* prepare his ſoul for God by meditation only, and ſpiritual recollection and ſoliloquies; but by a careful and circumſpect regulation of all his actions, *Pſal.* ci. 2, 3. *I will behave myſelf wiſely in a perfect way: O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my houſe with a perfect heart. I will ſet no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave to me.* And how earneſtly does he pray againſt God's forſaking him? Pſal. li. 11. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.* The *reſult* of all this, muſt needs be *ſtedfaſtneſs* and *growth* in holineſs and goodneſs. For, *firſt*, This is the natural influence of ſuch a dependance upon God; it places us always before him, and makes us walk humbly and circumſpectly, as becomes thoſe that are awed by the preſence of ſo

holy a Majeſty: I have *ſet the Lord always before me; becauſe he is at my right-hand, I ſhall not be moved*, Pſal. xvi. 1. *Secondly*, We cannot doubt but that God will plentifully beſtow his grace on thoſe, who thus rely upon him. For where can he beſtow it with more advantage to his glory, or to the propagation of holineſs? both of which are ſo dear to him. Who is a ſubject more capable of it, or who can be better entitled to it, than he who thus depends upon God? As he begs it *humbly*, and receives it *thankfully*; ſo he will huſband it *carefully*, and employ it *zealouſly*.

§ 3. In *prayer*, *meditation*, and other *inſtrumental duties* of religion, we are to aim at *one* or *all* of theſe *three* things.

1. The quickening and enlivening the *Conſcience*. 2. The confirming and ſtrengthening our *reſolutions* of obedience. 3. The raiſing and keeping up *holy* and *devout affections*. Great is the benefit of *each* of theſe. *Tenderneſs* of *conſcience* will keep us not only from evil, but every appearance of it; increaſe of *ſpiritual ſtrength* will render us ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in all the works of God; and *holy paſſion* will make us abound in them. To ſpiritual *paſſion* we owe the zeal and pleaſure, to ſpiritual *ſtrength* and *liberty*, the conſtancy and

and uniformity of an holy life; and both *ſtrength* and *paſſion* are generally owing to a *tender* and *enlightened conſcience*. For while the *conſcience* preſerves a *quick* and *nice* ſenſe of good and evil, all the great truths of the goſpel will have their proper force and natural efficacy upon us. Theſe then are the genuine *fruits* of *meditation*, the *euchariſt*, *pſalmody*, and ſuch like. If they do not add life and light to the *conſcience*; if they do not augment our *ſtrength*, nor exalt our *paſſions*; if they do not increaſe our deteſtation of *ſin*, and our love to God and goodneſs; if they do not quicken and exite devout purpoſes; if they do not engage and refreſh the ſoul by holy joy and heavenly pleaſure; if, I ſay, they do not in ſome degree or other promote *theſe* things, we reap *no* benefit at all from them, or we can never be *certain* that we do. But though the ends I have mentioned, be of this great uſe to *all*, and conſequently *all* are obliged to aim at them, yet may the *different* defects and imperfections of *different* Chriſtians, render *one* of theſe ends more neceſſary than *another*; and by conſequence, it will be *wiſdom* more immediately and directly to intend and purſue *that*. For *example*; if a man's *temper* be ſuch, that his *paſſions* do ſoon kindle, and ſoon die again; that he is apt to form wiſe and great projects, and as

unapt to accompliſh any thing; in *this* caſe, it will be his duty to aim eſpecially at the *increaſe of ſtrength*. But if on the *other* hand, a man's *temper* be cold and phlegmatick, ſlow and heavy; it is but fit that he ſhould particularly apply himſelf to the awakening and exciting *devout affections* in his ſoul. For *as* excellent purpoſes do often miſcarry for want of conſtancy and firmneſs of mind; *ſo* ſteadineſs and firmneſs of mind doth ſeldom effect any great matter, when it wants life and paſſion to put it into motion. *Again*, if one's *paſt* life has been very *ſinful*, or the *preſent* be not very *fruitful*, it will behove ſuch a one to increaſe the *tenderneſs of conſcience*, to add more light and life to its *convictions*; that, by a daily repetition of contrition and compunction, he may waſh off the *ſtain*, or, by the fruitfulneſs of his following life, repair the *barrenneſs* of that paſt. Having thus, in few words, both made out the uſefulneſs of thoſe *three ends* I propoſed to a Chriſtian in the performance of *inſtrumental* duties of religion, and ſhewed in what caſes he may be obliged to aim more immediately at *one* than *another*; I will *now* enquire, and that as briefly as I can, *how* theſe *three ends* may be *ſecured* and *promoted*.

1*ſt*, Of

1*ſt*, Of *tenderneſs of conſcience*, or the full and lively convictions of it.

To promote this, the *firſt* thing neceſſary is *meditation*. No man, who diligently ſearches and ſtudies the *Book of God*, can be a ſtranger to *himſelf* or to his *duty*. *Not* to his *Duty*; for this *book* reveals the whole *will of God* in clear and full terms; it gives us ſuch infallible *characters* of good and evil, right and wrong, as render our ignorance or error inexcuſable: it points out the great *ends* of *life* ſo plainly, and conducts to them by ſuch general and unerring *rules*, that there is no variety of circumſtances can ſo perplex and ravel our duty, but that an *honeſt* man by the help of this may eaſily diſcover it. For this reaſon 'tis, that the *Word of God* is called *light*, becauſe it does diſtinguiſh between good and evil, right and wrong; and like a *lamp* does manifeſt the path which we are to chuſe, and diſperſes that *miſt* and *darkneſs*, with which the luſt of man, and the ſubtilty of hell has covered it. And for this reaſon 'tis, that the good have ſuch a *value*, and the wicked ſuch an *averſion* for the *Book of God*. For *every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved. But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God*, John iii.

iii. 20, 21. Nor can he that ſtudies the *Word of God*, be a ſtranger to *himſelf* any more than to his duty. For this light ranſacks all the receſſes of the ſoul; it traces all its affections back to their firſt ſprings and ſources; it lays open all its deſires and projects, and ſtrips its moſt ſecret purpoſes of all their diſguiſes: *For the word of God is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword; piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. iv. 12. In a word, if we would preſerve the *conſcience quick* and *ſenſible*, we muſt be daily converſant in the *Book of God*. For this commands with that authority, inſtructs with that clearneſs, perſuades with that force, reproves with that purity, prudence, and charity, that we ſhall not eaſily be able to reſiſt it: it deſcribes righteouſneſs and ſin in ſuch true and lively colours, proclaims rewards and puniſhments in ſuch powerful and moving language, that it rouſes even the dead in ſin, penetrates and wounds the ſtupid and obdurate.

To *meditation* we muſt add *prayer*. For this is a very proper and eſſential *means* to refreſh and renew in the ſoul, the hatred of ſin, and love of goodneſs; and to improve thoſe impreſſions which *meditation* has made upon it. We cannot eaſily put up

up petitions to *God* with confidence, unleſs we do the things that *pleaſe* him; for our hearts will miſgive us, and our very petitions will reproach us: and the mere *thought* of entering more immediately into the preſence of God does oblige us to a more careful trial and examination of our actions. For God being not only omniſcient, but juſt and holy too, we can no more flatter our ſelves with the hope of pardon for any ſin into which we are betrayed by fondneſs or negligence, than we can imagine him ignorant of it. But this is not all; we are to pray, that God would enable us to *ſearch* out and *diſcover* our own hearts. *Pſal.* cxxxix. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me and know my thoughts; and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.* And if we do this ſincerely, God will undoubtedly grant our requeſts; and will lay open to us all our preſent defects and infirmities, and ſhew us how far ſhort we come of the *glory of God:* that *Perfection* of holineſs and happineſs, which many eminent *ſaints* actually arrived at upon earth. And we may be ſure, *that* light which breaks in upon our mind with this brightneſs, will not ſuffer any latent *corruptions* to continue undiſcovered; nor permit us to forget the ſtains and ruins, which the *ſins* of our paſt life have

have left behind them. *Converſation* is another way, by which we learn to know ourſelves, and by which *conſcience* is kept *awake*, and in its *vigour*. How convictive, how *moving* is the diſcourſe of a devout and pious *friend?* when he complains, or when he rejoices; when he relates the hiſtory of his own experience; when he lets us ſee the deſigns he has formed, and the excellent ends his ſoul thirſts after; how does our heart burn within us? what variety of *affection* does it raiſe in us, when he makes his remarks on human nature and the world; when he bewails the diſhonour of God and the decay of religion amongſt us; when he relates the miſery and misfortune of ſinners, and obſerves the particular ſins and follies that occaſion it? how often does he hereby *provoke* us to wiſe *reflections* on ourſelves? how many new beauties does he *diſcover* to us in virtue? how many deformities in ſin, which had eſcaped *our* obſervations? but 'tis not the *converſation* only of my friend, but his *life* alſo, from which I derive, or may do ſo, *inſtruction* and *admonition*. The *Perfections* of my *friend* are the gentleſt and the mildeſt, and yet the moſt awakening *reproofs* too of my *own defects*; and by the freſhneſs and luſtre of his *virtue*, I diſcern beſt the weakneſs and the dimneſs of my *own*. How often have I been moved to

turn

turn my thoughts with ſome *indignation* on my own heats and commotions, while I have admired and bleſſed the ſweetneſs and the gentleneſs, the ſoftneſs and the calm, very conſpicuous in an excellent friend? and when I have heard *another* mention his *nightly praiſes*, and thoſe divine thoughts which filled the *intervals* of his *ſleep*, and made thoſe hours that are ſo burthenſome to ſome, the moſt entertaining and delightful parts of his reſt, how have I been inwardly filled with confuſion and ſhame? how have I upbraided and reproached myſelf, condemned the ſluggiſhneſs of my days, the dulneſs and the wanderings of my ſoul by night? and I believe every ſincere man muſt find himſelf thus affected on the like occaſions. For in *this* kind of *reproof*, which I talk of, there is ſomething more of force and authority than is to be found in any *other*; for the example of friends, does not only teach us *what* we are to do, but demonſtrates alſo that it *may* be done. Nor does virtue any-where appear with ſo lovely and charming an *air*, as in a friend. But after all, amongſt all the benefits we gain by excellent friendſhips, we ought not to reckon *this* as the *leaſt*, that it is one, and that an indiſpenſible *office of friendſhip*, to *admoniſh* and *reprove*: *For the reproofs of inſtruction are the paths of life*,

life, Prov. vi. 23. But then that we may be capable of this bleſſing, we muſt diſpoſe our minds to *expect* and *bear* reproof; we muſt ſtrive after an humble and teachable temper; and we muſt invite and encourage our friends to this kindeſt office; not only by unaffected requeſts, but alſo by *obeying* their advice; *pardoning* whatever infirmity may be interſperſed with it, and *loving* them the better, as indeed they deſerve: for there is ſcarce any *better* proof of their affection, prudence and courage, which they are capable of giving us.

2*dly*, A *ſecond* end of *inſtrumental* duties is the *increaſe of ſpiritual ſtrength*. Now *ſpiritual ſtrength* conſiſts in the power and dominion we have over our affections and actions: and it ſtands upon *two baſes*; the *reduction of ſin*, and the *growth of virtue*; whatever does weaken and reduce our propenſions to ſin, whatever promotes the ſubjection of the body, adds power and authority to the mind, and renders virtue more eaſy and pleaſant. And becauſe virtues have a mutual connexion and dependance upon one another; therefore whatever promotes any one promotes all. But, eſpecially, whatever ſtrengthens our hope, or quickens our fear, or enlarges our knowledge, and encreaſes our faith; this does confirm and eſta-

eſtabliſh our reſolution more than any thing elſe. *Faith* is the *root*, *fear* the *guard*, and *hope* the *ſpur* of all our virtues. Faith convinces us what is our duty; fear makes us impartial, diligent, and watchful; hope, reſolved and active in the proſecution of it. It being thus clear *what* our *ſpiritual ſtrength* conſiſts in, it will be eaſy to diſcern by what *means* we are to gain it. But I can here only ſuggeſt thoſe hints and intimations which the *reader* muſt upon occaſion, as he needs, enlarge and improve.

1. *Meditation* is the *firſt* thing neceſſary. We muſt often ſurvey the grounds and foundations of our faith; we muſt conſider frequently and ſeriouſly the *ſcripture topicks* of hope and fear; ſuch are the death of *Jeſus*, a judgment to come, the holineſs and juſtice, and the omnipreſence of *God:* we muſt diligently obſerve the wiles and ſtratagems of *Satan*, the arts and inſinuations of the *world* and *fleſh*, and mark the progreſs of *ſin* from its very beginning to maturity; and all this with a particular regard to the corruption of our own *nature*, and the deceitfulneſs of our own *hearts*. We muſt often ponder upon the beauty and peace of *holineſs*, the love of *God* and of *Jeſus*, the virtues, ſufferings, and crowns of *martyrs*. And, *finally*, if we will increaſe in *ſtrength*, we muſt practiſe this duty of

meditation often, and we muſt not ſuffer ourſelves to be withdrawn from it, or be prevailed with to intermit it on any ſlight and trivial pretences. And becauſe we are not always *maſters* of our own *affairs*, nor conſequently of our *time*; therefore ought we to have ever ready at hand, a good collection of *texts*, which contain, in *few* words, the power, and ſpirit of *goſpel motives*, the *perfection* and beauty of duties, and the ſubſtance of advice and counſel: and to fix theſe ſo in our *memory*, that they may ſerve as a *ſhield* for us to oppoſe, as our *Saviour* did, *againſt the darts of the devil*, and as a *ſupply* of excellent and uſeful thoughts upon a ſudden: ſo that in all the little interruptions of buſineſs, and the many little vacancies of the day, the mind, which is an active and buſy ſpirit, may never want a proper *ſubject* to work upon: much leſs loſe itſelf in wild and lazy amuſements, or *defile* itſelf by vain or vicious thoughts. But we muſt not only take care that *meditation* be frequent, but alſo that it be not looſe and roving. To which end it will be neceſſary to ſtudy our *ſelves* as well as the *ſcriptures*, and to be intimately acquainted with the advantages and diſadvantages of our conſtitution, and our ſtate; ſo that in our *meditations* on the *ſcriptures*, we may more particularly have

have an eye to thoſe vices *we* are moſt obnoxious to, and thoſe virtues which are either more neceſſary, or more feeble and under-grown.

Next after *meditation* muſt follow *prayer*. Great is the *power* of *prayer* in promoting Chriſtian ſtrength and fortitude; whether we conſider its *prevalence upon God*, or its natural *influence upon ourſelves*. If we conſider the *latter*, what divine force and energy is there in the confidences of faith, the joys of hope, the earneſt longings and deſires of love, the tender ſorrows of contrition, the delight of praiſes and thankſgivings, the adorations and ſelf-depreſſions of a profound humility, and the reſolutions and vows of a perfect abhorrence of, and holy zeal and indignation againſt ſin! how do theſe things mellow and enrich the ſoul! how do they raiſe it higher and higher above *the corruption which is in the world through luſt!* how do they renew it daily, and make it a *partaker of the divine Nature!* the repetition of the ſame acts naturally begets an habit; an habit is the ſtrength and perfection of the ſoul; for it is a diſpoſition ripened and confirmed by cuſtom. How naturally then muſt *prayer* fortify the mind, ripen good diſpoſitions, or add ſtrength and perfection to good habits! ſince it is nothing elſe but a re-

peated *exerciſe* of almoſt all the graces of the goſpel, repentance, faith, hope, charity, and the like: and it ought to be obſerved, that *prayer* gives us a frequent opportunity of exerciſing *thoſe* virtues, which we ſhould not otherwiſe be ſo often obliged to do. If, *ſecondly, we enquire* into the *prevalence of prayer with God,* we ſhall have further reaſons yet to reſolve, that it is a moſt effectual *means of encreaſing our ſpiritual ſtrength.* What will God deny to the prayer of a righteous man? He may deny him temporal things, becauſe they are not good for him. He may refuſe to remove a temptation, becauſe this is often an occaſion of his own glory, and his ſervant's reward; but he will never refuſe him grace to conquer it. He will no more deny his Spirit to one that earneſtly and ſincerely begs it, than the natural parent will bread to his hungry and craving child. And no wonder, ſince grace is as neceſſary to the ſpiritual life as bread to the natural; the goodneſs of God is more tender and compaſſionate than any inſtinct in human nature; and the purity and perfection of God more zealouſly ſollicitous for the holineſs and immortality of *his* children, than earthly parents can be for a ſickly periſhing life of theirs. Thus then 'tis plain, that *prayer* contributes wonderfully to the

ſtrengthening

ſtrengthening and *eſtabliſhing* the mind of man in goodneſs. But then we muſt remember, that it muſt have theſe *two qualifications*; it muſt be *frequent* and *inceſſantly importunate*. 1. It muſt be *frequent*. I would have this rule complied with as far as it may, even in our ſtated, regular, and ſolemn addreſſes to God. But becauſe buſineſs, and ſeveral obligations we lie under to the world, do often preſs hard upon us; therefore muſt I give the ſame counſel *here*, which I did before under the *head of meditation*; that is, to have always ready and imprinted in our *memory* ſeveral *texts of ſcripture*, containing the moſt weighty and important truths, in the moſt piercing and moving language; that we may be able to form theſe on a ſudden into *ejaculations*, in which our *ſouls* may mount up into *heaven*, amidſt the ardours and tranſports of deſires and praiſe, as the angel did, in the flame of *Manoah*'s ſacrifice. 2. *Prayer* muſt be *inceſſantly importunate*. *Importunate* it will be, if the ſoul be prepared and diſpoſed as it ought; that is, if it be diſengaged from this world, and poſſeſſed entirely with the belief and earneſt expectation of a better; if it be humbled in itſelf, diſclaim all ſtrength and merit of its own, and reſt wholly on the goodneſs and all-ſufficiency of God. I add *inceſſantly*, in conformity to the *parables*

of our *Lord*, Luke xi. 8. and xviii. 5. and the ἀδιαλείπτως of the *apoſtle*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. And whoſoever conſiders human nature well, and remembers how ſoon pious motions vaniſh, and how little they effect, will diſcern a plain reaſon, both for *vehemence* and *perſeverance in prayer:* for *vehemence*, that the ſoul may be deeply impreſſed by pious paſſions; for *perſeverance*, that ſuch impreſſions may not be effaced and obliterated. Nor let any one fancy, that *prayer* thus qualified has not a better influence upon *God*, as well as upon *ourſelves:* 'tis true, *God* is void of the painfulneſs and defects of *human* paſſions, but not of the Perfection of *divine* ones. Woe were to us, if God were an inflexible, inexorable Deity, and incapable of being wrought upon by the inceſſant importunity of his poor creatures; woe were to us, if the ſoftneſs and the tenderneſs of the *divine Nature* did not infinitely exceed the little reſemblances of it in *man:* If, in a word, God did not abound in goodneſs, mercy, and compaſſion, more eaſily to be moved and excited than thoſe human paſſions that bear ſome *analogy* to them. Next to *converſation with God by prayer*, the *converſation of good men* does wonderfully contribute to the building us up in faith and virtue: How does the ſenſe and experience of ſuch as deſerve our eſteem

and

and affection, ſettle and eſtabliſh our judgment when they concur with us! how does their knowledge enlighten us, their reaſon ſtrengthen our faith, and their example inflame us with emulation! A pious friendſhip renders religion itſelf more engaging: it ſanctifies our very diverſions and recreations, and makes them miniſter to virtue; it minds us when we are forgetful, ſupports and encourages us when we faint and tire, reproves and corrects us when we give back, and recalls us into the right path when we go out of it. This is, or this *ſhould* be, the buſineſs of *converſation*, the end and advantage of *friendſhip*: we ſhould be often *talking* together of the things of God, *communicating* and laying open the ſtate of our ſouls, our fears, our hopes, our improvements, and defects; we ſhould *watch* over one another, *comfort* and *ſupport* one another; our *diſcourſe* ſhould always miniſter new warmth, or new ſtrength to our holy faith and love. But among *all* the *means of grace*, there is *no one* does ſo much *corroborate* and *nouriſh* the ſoul of man as the *Holy Euchariſt*. How many wiſe and impartial reflections does the *preparation* for it occaſion? What unfeigned humility, and what a profound awe of the divine Majeſty, does a previous *ſelf-examination* beget in us? What a tender ſenſe

of the divine love does the *contemplation* of the whole myſtery inkindle? What firmneſs and reſolution do we derive from freſh *vows* and repeated *engagements*; and theſe offered up with ſo much *ſolemnity?* And how much, finally, is the habit of holineſs improved by that *ſpiritual pleaſure*, which the ſenſible *aſſurances* of grace and ſalvation work in us, by that *awe* and holy *fear*, which the whole action leaves behind on our minds, and the *zeal*, *vigilance*, and *circumſpection* it obliges us to for the time following? Not to mention here, how the participation of this *holy ſacrament* obliges us to a moſt ſolemn *exerciſe* of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus, of brotherly love and charity, and the hope of immortality and glory. *Here*, in a word, we prepare to meet *God* as we would do in death and judgment; *here* we make an open profeſſion of our holy faith, renounce the world and fleſh, all our ſinful or vain deſires; devote ourſelves to the ſervice of *Jeſus*, and learn to expect happineſs from nothing elſe, but the merits and the imitation of his croſs. So profound is the *wiſdom* of this inſtitution, that it evidently ſpeaks *God* the *author* of it, and proclaims the too common *neglect* of it in moſt parts of *this nation*, an *inexcuſable* ſin and folly.

3. A *third end* of *inſtrumental* duties of religion, is the *raiſing* and *keeping up holy* and *devout affections*. I know not why *paſſion* is ſo commonly undervalued and diſparaged in *religion*, unleſs they, who thus treat it, mean nothing by it, but a ſhort-lived and ſuperficial commotion of the mind, which leaves no print or reliſh behind it, and is preſently ſucceeded by ſin and folly. *Holy paſſion* is the vigour and ſtrength of the ſoul; 'tis the ſtate and frame of the mind when it is thoroughly moved and affected. And therefore to form to one's ſelf *religion* deſtitute of *paſſion*, is little better than to content one's ſelf with one that is lazy, lukewarm, and lifeleſs. And tho' there be ſome *tempers* very unapt to be *moved*, yet 'tis hard to imagine how even theſe can be wrought up to a reſolution, or that reſolution be ſupported and continued without their being affected ſo thoroughly, as to feel either a *real* paſſion, or ſomething very nearly *approaching* one. 'Tis an excellent frame of ſpirit, when the ſoul is eaſily elevated and tranſported into *holy paſſion*: and I find that all thoſe *virtues*, or rather *acts of virtue*, which are deſcribed to the life, and which are by all judged moſt perfect and lovely, have moſt of *paſſion* in them. How *warm* and *paſſionate* was the *love* of *David* for his *God!* what flame, what

vehemence

vehemence of deſire was he moved by, when he cries out, *Pſal.* xlii. 1, 2. *As the heart panteth after the water brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God: my ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God.* What awful concuſſions and agitations of ſpirit did he feel, when he thus deſcribes his *fear! My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments,* Pſal. cxix. 120. What afflictions of ſoul, what tenderneſs of heart do we meet with in the *repentance* of St. *Peter*, when *he went forth and wept bitterly!* of Mary *Magdalen*, or whoever that *woman* in *Luke* vii. was, when *ſhe waſhed the feet of our Saviour with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head!* and of the *royal Pſalmiſt*, when he *watered his couch with his tears!* Pſal. vi. 6. Nor were the pleaſures of *aſſurance* leſs ſenſible and vehement than the ſorrows of *repentance*, when the *firſt Chriſtians rejoiced with joy unſpeakable, and hopes full of glory.* Shall I here add *that* holy *indignation* againſt *ſin, that* vehement deſire of making ſome *reparation* for it, which is the effect of godly ſorrow, that *zeal* and *fervency* of ſpirit in the ſervice of God, which is the *higheſt* character of *Perfection* it ſelf? Shall I call theſe *paſſions?* I muſt not; for tho' they have the heat and agitation of *paſſion*, they have in them the firmneſs and ſteadineſs of an *habit*. And I wiſh

wiſh with all my heart, that all thoſe other excellent *affections* of ſoul, which I before named, could be rendered *natural* and *habitual*. The *nearer* we come to *this*, undoubtedly the *perfecter*. I doubt mortality is incapable of any ſuch height: but the more *frequent* as well as the more *vehement* and *fervent* ſuch *affections* are, the *better* certainly; for great is the force and virtue of *holy paſſion*; the flame of *love* refines our nature, and purifies it from all its droſs; the tears of a *godly ſorrow* extinguiſh all our carnal and worldly luſts; and the agitations of *fear* preſerve the chaſtity and purity of the ſoul. 'Tis plain then, that our religion ought to be animated by *holy paſſions*; that the more frequent and natural theſe grow, the more *perfect* we are; that being the moſt excellent frame of ſpirit, when we are moſt apt to be ſenſibly and thoroughly *affected* by divine truths. By what *means* we may attain to this, is *now* briefly to be conſidered. 'Tis certain, that great and important, wonderful and glorious *truths*, will not fail to affect us, and that throughly, unleſs luſt or infidelity have rendered us ſtupid and impenetrable. And that *goſpel-truths* are *ſuch*, is no doubt at all; let the conviction be full, the repreſentation lively, and the *truth* will do its work. 'Tis for want of ſuch circumſtances and ſuch ſenſible

notions

notions of an object as may ſtrike the imagination; for want of cloſe and particular applications, when *divine truths* do not move us. This now does not only call us to the frequent *meditation* of the moſt *affecting* ſubjects, the majeſty and omnipreſence of God; the ſuffering of Chriſt, death and judgment, heaven and hell; but it ſhews alſo, how to model and form our *meditations*, that they prove not cold and ſluggiſh. Let the object of our thoughts be deſcribed by the moſt *ſenſible* images or reſemblances; let it be clad with the moſt *natural* circumſtances; let it be made as *particular* as it can, by fixing its eye *upon* us, and pointing its motion *towards* us; but above all, and in the firſt place, let the *proof* of it be clear and ſtrong. *Prayer* is an exerciſe very apt to move the *paſſion:* the mind having diſengaged itſelf from all earthly and bodily affections, is prepared for the impreſſion of *truth* and the *Spirit of God*; it draws nearer into the preſence of God, and the ſenſe of this ſheds an awful reverence upon it; it has a clearer, calmer, and more ſerious *view* of divine things, than when it is obſcured and diſturbed by worldly objects. In a word, *meditation* is in *this* exerciſe rendered more *ſolemn* and more *particular*; and when the holy fire is kindled in the ſoul, it dilates and diffuſes it ſelf more

more and more, till the ſtrength of deſire, the vehemence of holy love tranſcending the weakneſs of this mortal nature, we *faint* under the *paſſions* that we cannot *bear*. The *Lord's Supper* is an holy rite, wonderfully adapted to raiſe excellent *paſſions: Here* Chriſt is, as it were, *ſet forth crucified amongſt us*; we ſee his *body* broken, and his *blood* poured forth; *here* with a devout joy we receive and embrace him by faith and love in thoſe *ſymbols* of his body and blood, and *pledges* of his love. The *ſoul* muſt be very *ill prepared*, it muſt have very imperfect notions of ſin and damnation, the croſs of Chriſt, grace and ſalvation, which is not ſenſible of a *croud* of *holy paſſions* ſpringing up in it at this *ſacrament*. *Hymns* and *Pſalms* have, by I know not what natural *magick*, a peculiar force and operation upon a pious mind. *Divine Poetry* has a noble elevation of thoughts; it does not deviſe and counterfeit *paſſions*, but only *vent:* thoſe which it *feels*; and theſe are pure and lovely, kindled from above. Therefore are all its characters natural, its deſcription lively, its language moving and powerful; and all is ſo directly ſuited to a *devout* mind, that it preſently enters, moves, and actuates it, inſpires and informs it with the very *paſſions* it deſcribes. And though all good men are not *equally* moved in this duty,

duty, yet all, I believe, are *more* or *less* moved. It was very much the buſineſs of the *prophets*, and all of *prophetic education*; our *Lord* and his *diſciples* practiſed it frequently; it was ever a great part of *religious joy*, and one of the greateſt pleaſures of pious *retirement*: and I wiſh from my heart the eſteem of it were revived in our days; I perſuade myſelf it would add much to the *warmth* and *pleaſure* of devotion; it would contribute to introduce *religion* into our *families*; and for ought I know, into our very *recreations* and *friendſhips*. And this minds me, that as I have under every *foregoing Head* taken notice of the advantages of *converſation*, ſo I ſhould not forget it *here*. This has a lively influence upon our minds, and always kindles in the ſoul a gentle heat. And did we but accuſtom ourſelves to *entertain* one another with diſcourſe about another world; did we mingle the *praiſes of God* with the feaſts and joys of life; did we retire to our *country-houſes*, to contemplate the variety and riches of divine wiſdom and bounty in thoſe *natural* ſcenes of pleaſure which the *country* affords, and did we now and then invite our *friends* to join with us in offering up *Hallelujah*'s to God on this account, what brightneſs and ſerenity, what calm and pleaſure would this diffuſe through all our ſouls, through

all

all our days! To this that I have ſaid touching the exciting *holy paſſions*, I will only add one *obſervation*, formed upon thoſe words of the *apoſtle*, James v. 13. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him ſing Pſalms:* That *religion* muſt be accommodated to *nature*, and that devout *paſſions* will ſoon ſhoot up, when they are engrafted upon a *natural* ſtock. With which I will join this *other*, that ſince we are moſt affected by ſuch truths as are moſt particular, circumſtantiated, and ſenſible, and therefore imprint themſelves more eaſily and deeply on our imagination; for this reaſon I ſhould recommend the *reading* the *lives* of *ſaints* and *excellent perſons*, were they not generally writ ſo, that we have reaſon to deſire ſomewhat more of the ſpirit of *piety* in the *learned*, and more of *judgment* in the *pious*, who have employed their pens on this argument.

§ 4. The immediate *ends* of *diſcipline* are the *ſubduing the pride of the heart*, and the *reducing the appetites of the body*. By *diſcipline*, I here underſtand whatever *voluntary rigours* we impoſe upon our *ſelves*, or whatever *voluntary reſtraints* we lay upon our allowed *enjoyments*. And when I ſay, that the *humiliation* of the *heart*, and ſubjection of the *body* are the immediate ends of

of *both*, I do not exclude any *other* which may be *involved* in theſe, or *reſult* from them. Nor, of what *importance* theſe two things are, I need not ſhew. For ſince all ſin is diſtinguiſhed in ſcripture into the filthineſs of the *ſpirit* and the *fleſh*, it is plain, that the *pride* of the *heart*, and the *luſt* of the *body*, are the *two* great cauſes of all immorality and uncleanneſs. And therefore theſe are the *two* great *ends* which the wiſe and good have ever had in their *eye*, in all their acts of *ſelf-denial* and *mortification*. This is ſufficiently atteſted by the example of *David*, Pſal. cxxxi. *Lord, I am not high-minded, I have no proud looks. I do not exerciſe myſelf in great matters, which are too high for me: But I refrain my ſoul, and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from his mother; yea, my ſoul is even as a weaned child.* And from that other of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26, 27. *And every one that ſtriveth for the maſtery, is temperate in all things: Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly; ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection; leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.* Whoever thus mortifies the *pride* of the *heart*, whoever thus brings under the *body*, will ſoon find himſelf

elf truly ſet *free*, and *maſter* of himſelf and fortune: he will be able to *run the way of God's commandments*, and to advance on ſwiftly towards *Perfection*, and the pleaſure and happineſs that attends it.

And to *attain* theſe bleſſed ends, I do not think that we need enſnare our ſouls in the perpetual bonds of *monaſtick vows*; I do not think that we are to expoſe our ſelves by any *ridiculous* or *fantaſtick* obſervances: there is, I ſay, no *need* of this; for we may, as oft as we ſhall ſee fit, retrench our pleaſures, abate of the ſhew and figure of life; we may renounce our own wills to comply with theirs who cannot ſo well pretend either to authority or diſcretion: and if theſe things cannot be done in ſome circumſtances, without becoming *fools for Chriſt*; that is, without that tameneſs, that condeſcenſion, that diminution of our ſelves, which will never comport with the humours and the faſhions of the world; here is ſtill the more room for *mortification*, and for a nearer and more eminent imitation of the bleſſed *Jeſus*: provided ſtill we decline all affectation of ſingularity; and when we practiſe any extraordinary inſtance of *ſelf-denial*, we be ever able to juſtify it to religious and judicious perſons, by the propoſal of ſome excellent end. *Faſting* indeed is plainly deſcribed in *ſcripture*; and tho' the *obligation*

to it, with reſpect to its frequency and meaſure, be not the ſame on *all*, yet *all* ſhould ſome time or other practiſe it, as far as the rules of *Chriſtian prudence* will permit. And I have often thought, that *faſting* ſhould generally conſiſt, rather in abſtinence from *pleaſing meats*, than from *all*; not the food which *nouriſhes* our ſtrength, but that which *gratifies* the palate, miniſtring moſt directly to wantonneſs and luxury.

For the better regulating of voluntary diſcipline, I propoſe, by way of advice, three things. 1. I do not think it beſt to bring our ſelves under any perpetual and unalterable ties in any inſtance of ſelf-denial: there is a virtue in *enjoying* the world, as well as in *renouncing* it; and 'tis as great an excellence of religion to know how to *abound*, as how to *ſuffer want*. Nay, what is more, all voluntary auſterities are in order to give us a power and dominion over our ſelves in the general courſe of a proſperous life. And laſtly, I very much doubt, when once a man has long and conſtantly *accuſtomed* himſelf to any rigour, whether it *continue* to have much of *mortification* in it, or whether it ſo effectually tend to promote our *ſpiritual liberty*, as it would if we did *return* to it but *now* and *then*, as we ſaw occaſion. 2. We muſt not multiply *unneceſſary* ſeverities; and

and that no man may think more needful than really are, I obſerve here, that as there are very *few* who have not in their *nature* very conſiderable *infirmities*, ſo are there *as few* who have not in their *fortune* very conſiderable *inconveniencies*: and if they would apply themſelves to the *maſtering* of both theſe as they ought, they would ſtand in *leſs need* of the *diſcipline* of arbitrary auſterities. There are many things too *trifling* to be taken notice of, which yet do prove ſufficient to diſturb the quiet of moſt, and betray them to many paſſions and indecencies: nay, the weakneſſes of good men are ſometimes fed by temptations of very little moment. Now, to *ſurmount* theſe temptations, and to frame and accommodate the mind to bear the little ſhocks and juſtles which we daily meet with, without any diſcompoſure or diſpleaſure, is a matter of great *uſe* to the tranquillity of life, and the maturity of virtue. To be able to *bear* the pride of one, and the ſtupidity of another; one while to encounter rudeneſs, another while neglect, without being *moved* by either; to *ſubmit* to noiſe, diſorder, and the diſtraction of many little affairs, when one is naturally a lover of quietneſs and order, or when the mind is intent upon things of importance; in a word, to *digeſt* the perpetual diſappointments which we meet

with, both in buſineſs and pleaſure, and in all the little projects, which not the elegant and ingenious only, but people of all ſtations and all capacities purſue; to *ſuffer* all the humours and follies, the errors, artifices, indecencies, and faults of thoſe we have to do with, with that temper we ought, that is, with a *calmneſs* which proceeds, not from an unconcernment for the good of others, but a juſt dominion over our own ſpirits: *this* is a great *height*; and to train our ſelves up to it daily with much patience, vigilance and application of mind, is the *beſt diſcipline*: though I do not mean hereby to exclude all *voluntary impoſitions*; for, in order to *maſter* the evils which we cannot avoid, it may be of good uſe now and then to form the mind by *voluntary trials* and difficulties of our own chuſing.

3. Laſtly, We muſt ever have a care not to loſe the *ſubſtance* for the *ſhadow*; not to reſt in the *means*, and neglect the *end*; being much taken up in *diſcipline*, without producing any *fruit* of it. For this is taking much pains to little purpoſe; travelling much without making any progreſs. But much more muſt we take care, in the *next* place, that the *diſcipline* we put our ſelves upon, do not produce any *ill fruit*. To which end, we muſt carefully obſerve *three* things. 1. That we keep to that *moderation* which ſpiritual *prudence* requires; neither

neither expoſing nor entangling our ſelves, nor diſcouraging others by *exceſſes* and *extravagancies*. 2. That our *ſelf-denial* never betrays us into *pride* and *uncharitableneſs*; for if it tempts us to over-rate our ſelves and to deſpiſe others, this is a flat *contradiction* to one of the main ends of Chriſtian diſcipline, which is the *humiliation* of the *heart*. 3. That we ever preſerve, nay, increaſe the *ſweetneſs* and *gentleneſs* of our minds; for whatever makes us ſour and moroſe, or peeviſh and unſociable, makes us certainly ſo much worſe; and, inſtead of begetting in us nearer reſemblances of the *Divine* Nature, gives us a very ſtrong tincture of a *deviliſh* one. *Athanaſius* therefore, in the life of *Anthony the hermite*, obſerves, amongſt others his great virtues, that after thirty years ſpent in a ſtrange kind of retired and ſolitary life, καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ὠὶς ὄρει τραφεὶς κἀκεῖ γὲρων γενόμενος, ἄγριον εἶχε τὸ ἦθος, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρίεις ἦν, καὶ πολιτικός. He did not appear to his friends, with a ſullen or ſavage, but with an obliging ſociable *air*: and there is indeed but little reaſon, why the *look* ſhould be louring and contracted, when the *heart* is filled with joy and charity, goodneſs and pleaſure. A ſerene open *countenance*, and a chearful grave *deportment*, does beſt ſuit the tranquillity, purity, and dignity of a Chriſtian mind.

§ 5. *Laſtly, Some* kinds of *life* are better ſuited and accommodated to the great *ends* of religion and virtue than *others*. I ſhall not here enter into an examination of the advantages or diſadvantages there are in the *ſeveral kinds of life* with reference to religion. The ſettling *this* and ſeveral *other* things relating to it, was one main deſign of my *laſt book*. All therefore that I have *here* to do, is but to make one plain *inference* from all that has been advanced *in this chapter*. If *Perfection* and *happineſs* cannot be obtained without a frequent and ſerious *application* of our ſelves to the *means* here inſiſted on; then 'tis plain that we ought to caſt our *lives*, if we can, into ſuch a *method*, that we may be in a *capacity* to do this. To ſpeak more particularly and cloſely; ſince *meditation*, *prayer*, and *holy converſation* are ſo neceſſary to *quicken* the *conſcience*, *excite* our *paſſions*, and *fortify* our *reſolutions*; it is evident that it is as neceſſary ſo to model and form our lives, that we may have time enough to beſtow on theſe. For they, whoſe minds and time are taken up by the *world*, have very little leiſure for things of *this* nature, and are very little diſpoſed to them, and as ill qualified for them. As to *converſation*, as the world goes now, 'tis not to be expected that it ſhould have in it any reliſh of piety, unleſs between ſuch as have entered into

into a close and strict *friendship*. But the *worldly man* is a stranger to true *friendship*; 'tis too sacred, too delicate a thing, for a mind devoted to the *world*, to be capable of. A regard to interest, to some outward forms and decencies; the gratification of some natural inclination, the necessity of some kind of diversion and enjoyment, may invite him to more *familiarity* with some, than others. But 'tis hard to believe, that there should be any thing in such *combinations*, of *that* which is the very life and soul of *friendship*, a sincere and undesigning passion, increased by mutual confidencies and obligations, and supported and strengthened by virtue and honour. As to *prayer*, *men of business* do, I doubt, oftner *read* or *say prayers*, than *pray*; for 'tis very hard to imagine, that a soul that grovels perpetually here upon earth, that is incessantly sollicitous about the things of this world, and that enters abruptly upon this duty without any *preparation*, should immediately take fire, be filled with heavenly vigour, and be transported with earnest and impatient desire of grace and glory. Ah! how hard is it for him, who hungers and thirsts perpetually after the profits of *this world*, to *hunger and thirst after righteousness* too! if such minds as *these* retain the belief of a providence, some awe of God, and some degree of gratitude towards

him, 'tis as *much* as may reaſonably be expected from them: and may *this* avail them as far as it *can!* Laſtly, as to *meditation*, how can it be imagined, that ſuch, whoſe minds and bodies are fatigued and harraſſed by *worldly buſineſs*, ſhould be much inclined to it, or well prepared for it? How ſhould theſe men form any notion of a perfect and exalted virtue, of devout and heavenly paſſion? What conceptions can they have of the power and joy of the Holy Ghoſt, of poverty of ſpirit, or purity of heart, or the diffuſion of the love of God in our ſouls? What ideas can they entertain of an heaven, or of angelical pleaſure and beatitude? In a word, the *religion* of men intent upon *this world*, when they pretend to any, which too often they do not, conſiſts eſpecially in *two* things, in *abſtaining* from *wickedneſs*, and *doing the works* of their *civil calling*; and how far they may be ſenſible of *higher* obligations, I determine not. Good God! what a *mercy* it is to theſe poor creatures, that 'tis the faſhion of their country, as well as a precept of our religion, to dedicate *one* day in *ſeven* to the ſervice of God and their ſouls! but have I not often *taught*, that *purity of intention* converts the *works of a ſecular calling* into the *works of God?* I *have* ſo; 'tis univerſally taught; 'tis the doctrine of the goſpel; and therefore I ſhall never *retract* it:

it: but ah! how hard a thing is it for a *worldly man* to *maintain* this *purity of intention!* how hard a thing is it for a mind, eaten up by the love and cares of *this world*, to do all to the honour of God! tho' therefore I cannot *retract* this doctrine, yet the *longer* I live, the *more* reaſon do I ſee for *qualifying* and *guarding* it with this *caution:* let no man that deſires to be *ſaved*, much leſs that deſires to be *perfect*, take ſanctuary in *purity of intention*, while he ſuffers the works of his *ſecular calling* to ingroſs his ſoul, and entirely uſurp his time. If *ſecular works* exclude and thruſt out of doors ſuch as are properly *religious*, it will not be eaſy to conceive, how the power of godlineſs ſhould be maintained, how any wiſe thoughts, or heavenly deſires ſhould be preſerved in ſuch men; or how, finally, thoſe who have utterly given up themſelves to the *wiſdom of this world*, ſhould retain any true value for thoſe maxims of the goſpel, wherein conſiſts the *true wiſdom that is from above*. All that I have ſaid againſt a life of *buſineſs*, may, with equal or greater force, be urged againſt a life of *pleaſure*, I mean *that* which they call *innocent pleaſure:* the *one* and the *other* entangle and enſnare the mind; the *one* and the *other* leave in it a peculiar reliſh, which continues long after the hurry both of pleaſure and buſineſs

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is over. But all this while, I wou'd not have what I have *said* to be *extended* further than I design it, to raise *scruples* in *virtuous* and *good* men, instead of *reforming* the too eager applications of the *earthly* to the things of this world.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the motives *to Perfection. Several motives summ'd up in short; and that* great *one, of having the other* life *in our view, insisted upon.*

INnumerable are the *motives* to *Perfection*, which offer themselves to any one that reflects seriously on this argument. An hearty endeavour after *Perfection* is the best proof of *sincerity*; the neareſt approach to *Perfection* is the neareſt approach to the utmost *security* this life is capable of. Great is the beauty and loveliness of an *exalted* virtue, great the honour and authority of it; and a very happy influence it has even upon our temporal affairs: and to this may be added, the peace and tranquillity of a wise mind, sanctified affections, and a regular life. Besides, the love of *God* is boundless, and the love of *Jesus* is so too; and therefore demand not a lazy, feeble, or unsteddy

unſteddy virtue, but a ſtrong and vigorous one, a warm and active: ſuch as a true *faith*, great *hopes*, and a paſſionate *love* do naturally excite us to. To all this I might add, that the *Spirit* of God is always preſſing on and advancing, deſirous to communicate *himſelf* to us more and more plentifully, if we be not backward or negligent our ſelves. But theſe, and many other *inforcements* to the duty of *Perfection*, ſhould I enlarge on them, would ſwell this *treatiſe* to an intolerable bulk. Nor indeed is it neceſſary: for the 4th *chapter*, where I treat of the *Fruit of Perfection*, does contain ſuch *motives* to it, as are ſufficient to excite, in any one that reads them, a moſt vehement deſire and thirſt after it. Here therefore all that I think fit to do, is, to put my *reader* in mind of *another life*: in the glories and pleaſures of which I need not prove that the *perfect* man will have the greateſt ſhare. *This* is a *motive* that muſt never be out of the thoughts of the man that will be *perfect*; and that for *three* reaſons, which I will but juſt mention.

1. Without *another life*, we can never form any true notion of a *perfect virtue*. *Sociable* and *civil* virtues may be ſupported by *temporal motives*, and framed and modelled by *worldly conveniencies*; but a *divine* virtue

virtue must be built upon a *divine* life, upon a heavenly kingdom. The reason of this assertion is plain, the *means* must always bear proportion to the *end*; where therefore the end is an imperfect temporal good, there needs no more than imperfect *unfinished* virtue to attain it; but where the end is heavenly and immortal, the virtue ought to be *so* too. Were there no *other* life, the standard and measure of the good or evil to be found in actions would be their subserviency to the temporal good or evil of *this* world; and by a necessary consequence, it would be impossible to prove any higher degrees of poverty of spirit, purity of heart, charity, and the like, to be truly *virtue*, than what we could prove truly *necessary* to procure the good, or guard us against the evil of *this* life: and if so, 'tis easy to conclude what *mean* and *beggarly* kind of virtues would be produced from this ground.

2. Without *another life*, all other *motives* to *Perfection* will be insufficient. For though, generally speaking, such is the contrivance of human nature, that neither the common good of civil *society*, nor the more particular good of *private* men, can be provided for, or secured, without the practice of sociable and political *virtues*; yet

yet 'tis certain, that not only in many *extraordinary* cases there would be no *reward* at all for *virtue*, if there were not one reserved for it in *another world*; but also in most cases, if there were not a *future* pleasure, that did infinitely outweigh the enjoyments of *this* life, men would see no *obligation* to *Perfection*. For what should raise them above the love of *this* world, if there were no *other*? or above the love of the body, if when they died they should be no more for ever? and certainly our minds would never be able to soar very high, nor should we ever arrive at any excellence or Perfection in any action, if we were always under the influence of the love of the *world* and the *body*.

3. A *life to come* is alone a sufficient *motive* to *Perfection*. Who will refuse to *endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*, who firmly believes that *he* is now a spectator, and will very suddenly come to be a judge and rewarder of his sufferings? how natural is it to *run with patience the race that is set before us*, to him who has an *eternal* joy, an *eternal* crown always in his eye? and if a *life to come* can make a man rejoice even in *suffering evil*, how much more in *doing good*? If it enable him to *conquer* in the day of the church's trial and affliction, how much more

more will it enable him to *abound* in all *virtues* in the day of its peace and prosperity? how freely will a man give to the diſtreſſed *members of Chriſt*, who believes that he ſees *Chriſt* himſelf ſtanding by, and receiving it as it were by their hands, and placing it to his own account, to be repaid a thouſand-fold in *the great day of the Lord?* how eaſily will a man allay the ſtorms of paſſion, and caſt away the weapon of revenge and anger, with indignation againſt himſelf, if his faith do but preſent him often with a view of that *Canaan*, which the *meek in heart ſhall inherit* for ever? how importunately will a man pray for the pardon of ſin, whoſe ſenſe, whoſe ſoul, whoſe imagination is ſtruck with a dread of being for ever divided from God, and excluded from the joys and virtues of the bleſſed? how fervently will a man pray for the Spirit of God, for the increaſe of grace, whoſe thoughts are daily ſwallowed up with the contemplation of an eternity; and whoſe mind is as fully poſſeſſed of the certainty and the glory of *another world*, as of the emptineſs and vanity of *this?* how natural, finally, will it be to be poor in ſpirit, and to delight in all the offices of an unfeigned humility, to that man who has the image of *Jeſus waſhing the feet of his diſciples*, and a little

little after *aſcending* up into *heaven* always before him?

But I know it will be here *objected*, we *diſcern* not this efficacy you attribute to this *motive*. The doctrine of *another life* is the great *article* of the Chriſtian *faith*, and it is every-where preached throughout *Chriſtendom*; and yet men generally ſeem to have as much fondneſs for *this* world, as they could were there no *other*: they practiſe no virtues but ſuch as are profitable and faſhionable, or none any further than they are ſo. To this I *anſwer*; tho' *moſt* act thus, there are *many*, I hope *very many*, who do otherwiſe; and, that *all* in general do *not*, proceeds from want, either of due *conſideration* or firm *belief* of this doctrine of another life. *Firſt*, From not *conſidering* it as we ſhould. 'Tis the greateſt diſadvantage of the objects of *faith*, compared with thoſe of *ſenſe*, that they are diſtant and inviſible. *He* therefore that will be *perfect*, that will derive any ſtrength and *virtue* from this *motive*, muſt ſupply this diſtance by devout and daily *contemplation*; he muſt fetch the remote objects of *faith* home to him; he muſt render them, as it were, preſent; he muſt ſee and feel them by the ſtrength of *faith*, and the force of *meditation*; which if he do, then will his *faith* certainly prove a vital and victorious *principle*; then will

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no pleaſure in this world be able to combat the aſſured hopes of an *heaven*, nor any worldly evil or difficulty ſuſtained for virtue, be able to confront the terrors of an *hell*. A *ſecond* reaſon why this *motive* doth not operate as it ſhould, is want of *faith*. We doubt, we waver, we ſtagger, we take things upon truſt; aſſenting very ſlightly and ſuperficially to the doctrine of *another life*, and looking upon good works rather as not injurious to this world, than ſerviceable to a *better:* and then 'tis no more wonder that the *unbelieving Chriſtian* does not enter into Perfection and reſt, than that the *unbelieving Jew* did not: 'tis no more wonder, if the word of life do not profit the *Chriſtian* when *not believed* by him, than if it do not profit a *pagan*, who has *never heard* of it. And what is here ſaid of *infidelity*, is in its meaſure and proportion true when applied to a *weak* and *imperfect faith*. *He* therefore that will be *perfect* muſt daily pray, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*. He muſt daily *conſider* the grounds on which the faith and hope of a Chriſtian ſtand; the expreſs declarations of the divine will concerning the future immortality and glory of the children of God; the demonſtration of this contained in the reſurrection of *Jeſus* from the dead, and his aſcenſion, and ſeſſion at the right hand

hand of God: and to this he may add, the love of God, the merits of Jeſus, and the ſtate and fortune of virtue in this world. From all which one may be able to infer the undoubted *certainty* of *another world*. The *ſum* of all amounts to *this:* whoever will be *perfect*, muſt daily, I ſhould, I think, have ſaid almoſt hourly, ponder the *bleſſedneſs*, that attends *Perfection* in *another life*; he muſt ponder it *ſeriouſly*, that he may be thoroughly perſuaded of it: he muſt ponder it *often*, that the notions of it may be freſh and lively in his ſoul.

SECT. II.

Of the ſeveral parts of Perfection, illumination, liberty, *and* zeal.

WHAT the ſeveral *parts* of religious *Perfection* are, will be eaſily diſcerned by a very ſlight reflection, either on the *nature* of *man*, or the general *notion* of *Perfection* already laid down. If we conſider *man*, whoſe *Perfection* I am treating of; as it is plain that he is made up of *ſoul* and *body*, ſo 'tis as plain that moral *Perfection* relates to the *ſoul*, as the chief ſubject of it, and to the *body* no otherwiſe than as the *inſtrument* of that righteouſneſs which is planted in the *ſoul*. Now in the *ſoul* of man we find theſe three things;

underſtanding, *will*, and *affections:* in the improvement and accompliſhment of which, human *Perfection* muſt conſequently conſiſt. And if we enquire wherein this improvement or accompliſhment lies, 'tis a truth ſo obvious, that it will not need any proof, that *illumination* is the *Perfection* of the *underſtanding*, *liberty* of the *will*, and *zeal* of the *affections*. If, in the next place, we reflect upon the deſcription I have before given of Perfection, nothing is more evident, than that to conſtitute a firm *habit* of righteouſneſs, three things are neceſſary: 1. The *knowledge* of our *duty*, and our obligations to it. 2. The *ſubduing* our *luſts* and *paſſions*, that we may be enabled to perform it. Laſtly, Not only a free, but warm and vigorous *proſecution* of it. In the *firſt* of theſe conſiſts *illumination*; in the *ſecond*, *liberty*; and in the *third*, *zeal*. Upon the whole then 'tis evident, both from the *nature* of *Perfection* and of *man*, that I am now to treat in order of theſe three things, *illumination*, *liberty*, and *zeal*, as ſo many eſſential *parts* of religious *Perfection*. Nor muſt I ſtop here, but muſt to thoſe three unavoidably add *humility:* for whether we conſider the ſins of the *perfect* man's paſt life, or the ſlips and defects of his beſt ſtate; or whether we conſider man's continual dependance upon God in all reſpects, but eſpecially in reference to the

the beginning, progreſs, and conſummation of his *Perfection*; or whether laſtly, we conſider the ſcantineſs and deficiency, not only of this or that man's *Perfection* in particular, but of *human Perfection* in general, we cannot but conclude, that nothing can become mortal man (even tho' all the excellence human nature is capable of were united in one) better than *humility*. *Humility* therefore muſt begin and compleat religious *Perfection*; it muſt accompany the Chriſtian in every ſtage of his ſpiritual progreſs; it muſt crown all his actions, and add that beauty and excellence, that grace and luſtre to all his other virtues, that is wholly neceſſary to render them acceptable to God.

The general *notion* of *Perfection* being thus reſolved into its *parts*, 'tis plain I am now to diſcourſe of *each* of theſe. And what I have to ſay of *each* ought, according to the ſtrict rules of *method*, to be comprized within the *ſame* chapter: but to conſult the *eaſe* and *benefit* of my *reader*, I ſhall ſlight this nicety, and diſtribute my thoughts into as *many chapters* as I ſhall judge moſt convenient for the eaſe and ſupport of the *memory*.

CHAP. I.

Of illumination. I. *The diſtinguiſhing characters of illuminating truths.* 1. *They purify us.* 2. *They nouriſh and ſtrengthen us.* 3. *They delight us.* 4. *They procure us a glorious reward.* II. *The nature of illuminating knowledge.* 1. *It muſt be deeply rooted.* 2. *It muſt be diſtinct and clear.* 3. *It muſt be thoroughly concocted.*

§. 1. WHAT it is. It happens in the point of *illumination*, as it does in that of *happineſs*: all men, at firſt hearing, form in general an agreeable and pleaſing *notion* of it; all men admire and love it; but few have any diſtinct and true underſtanding of thoſe things which 'tis made up of. All men conceive *illumination* to be a ſtate of *light* and *knowledge*, as they do *happineſs* to be a ſtate of *pleaſure*: but are as little agreed in particular, wherein conſiſt the light or knowledge which makes the *one*, as wherein conſiſts the pleaſure that makes the *other*. The luſt and paſſion of ſome, the ſuperſtition and prejudice of others; curioſity and confidence, weakneſs and deſign, enthuſiaſm and fancy, embroil and perplex all things. However, every honeſt man hath a *clue*, by which he may eſcape out of this *labyrinth*. The *ſcripture* ſhines with bright and gracious beams through-

throughout all this darkneſs: and, if we will attend to it, we cannot wander into any dangerous miſtake. This deſcribes the ſtate of *illumination* very plainly to us, calling it ſometimes *wiſdom*, ſometimes *knowledge* and *underſtanding*; ſometimes *faith*, ſometimes the *ſpirit of wiſdom* and *revelation*. Next, it acquaints us with the *deſign* and *end* of it; namely, to *convert us from the power of Satan to the ſervice of the living God*, to purify and ſanctify us, to enable us to *approve the holy, acceptable and perfect will of God*, and, in one word, *to make us wiſe unto ſalvation*. Nay, it proceeds further, and points out to us particularly the *truths*, in the knowledge of which *illumination* conſiſts. Thus the *Old Teſtament* reckons *wiſdom* to be, ſometimes the *knowledge of God*, ſometimes the *knowledge of his law*, ſometimes the *underſtanding of proverbs and parables*; theſe containing as it were the ſoul of moral inſtruction, and wrapping up in a few and lively words, whatever the experience of the aged, or the obſervation of men of the moſt piercing judgment, thought beſt deſerved to be tranſmitted to poſterity. But all this amounts to the ſame thing, and all the deſcriptions of *wiſdom* in the *Old Teſtament* may be ſummed up into that one, *Job* xxviii. 28. *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom, and to depart*

from evil is underſtanding. The *New Teſtament* tells us, *this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent:* that *Chriſt is the way, the truth and the life;* that *in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge:* that true underſtanding conſiſts in *knowing the will of God; which will is our ſanctification.* And when St. *Paul* underſtands by *wiſdom,* as ſometimes he does, the penetrating into the ſpirit and myſtery, the depths and receſſes of the *Old Teſtament,* and diſcovering the great *deſign* of *man's redemption,* carried on through all the ages of the world, and through a wiſe variety of diſpenſations, this alters not the *notion* of *illumination:* for this does not point out to us any new or different truths; but only regards one peculiar way of explaining, or eſtabliſhing and confirming the great Chriſtian doctrine. To conclude; we may eaſily learn what ſort of *knowledge* the *Spirit of God* recommends to us above all other, from thoſe *petitions* which St. *Paul* puts up for the *Epheſians* and *Coloſſians.* For the *former* he prays thus, *that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, may give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the*

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ſaints, and what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, &c. Eph. i. 17, 18, 19, 20. For the *latter* thus: *that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom, and ſpiritual underſtanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God,* Col. i. 9, 10. If from theſe and the like *texts* we form a general *idea* of *illumination*, it will be this: *illumination* is a *ſtate* of *knowledge*, conſiſting in the aboliſhing or relinquiſhing thoſe *errors*, which deprave and pervert our affections, and undermine and ſupplant the empire and authority of reaſon; and in entertaining and embracing thoſe *truths*, which purify the one, and reſtore and eſtabliſh the other: and all this in order to entitle us to the favour of God, and a bleſſed eternity. I might content myſelf with this general delineation of *illumination:* but becauſe this is a ſubject from which we cannot but reap ſo much pleaſure and advantage, as will abundantly requite whatever labour can be beſtowed upon it; I will proceed to a *fuller* diſcovery of it, if I can.

Illumination then being a *ſtate of knowledge*, and the *object* of this *knowledge* being *truth*, 'tis plain, that in order to form a juſt and diſtinct *notion* of *illumination*, it will be neceſſary to enquire into *two* things: *Firſt*, What kind of *truths*, and *next*, what kind of *knowledge* of theſe *truths*, conſtitutes *illumination*.

1. Of the *truths* which *illuminate:* we have many noble characters in the *Old Teſtament* and the *New*, which diſtinguiſh *theſe* from *truths* of an *inferior* nature: all which are, I think, comprized by *Solomon* in very few words; *Prov.* xxiv. 13, 14. *My ſon*, ſaith he, *eat thou honey, becauſe it is good; and the honey-comb, which is ſweet to thy taſte; ſo ſhall the knowledge of wiſdom be unto thy ſoul when thou haſt found it; then there ſhall be a reward, and thy expectation ſhall not be cut off.* *Solomon* here, as is very uſual with *inſpired writers*, does compare ſpiritual with corporeal things, or illuſtrates the *one* by the *other*. He tells us, that what *honey* is to the *body*, that *wiſdom* is to the *ſoul:* and recommending the *former* from two incomparable properties, its miniſtring to *health* and *pleaſure*, he recommends the *latter* from advantages, which bear indeed ſome *reſemblance*; but are as much *ſuperior* to theſe, as the *ſoul* is to the *body*. *My ſon, eat thou honey, becauſe it is good*; i. e. becauſe

cauſe it both *cleanſes* and *purges* all noxious humours, and *nouriſhes* and *ſtrengthens* the body: *and the honey-comb, becauſe it is ſweet to the taſte*; which is the *ſecond excellence* of this ſort of *food*, namely, its *pleaſantneſs*; and properly urged to invite the eater: then, proceeding to compleat the compariſon, he adds, *ſo ſhall the knowledge of wiſdom be to thy ſoul, when thou haſt found it*; i. e. it ſhall miniſter to the *purification, ſtrength*, and *delight* of thy *ſoul*. But this is not all: though the parallel can be extended no further between *honey* and *wiſdom*; yet he does not think fit for that reaſon to omit one of the greateſt *excellencies* of *wiſdom*: and therefore he adds, *then there ſhall be a reward, and thy expectation ſhall not be cut off*. *Wiſdom* does not only *perfect* and *entertain* our minds; but alſo it gives us a title to thoſe *rewards*, for the enjoyment of which it prepares and fits us. Here then we have from *Solomon* the true *properties* of true *wiſdom*: by theſe we may pronounce ſafely of all the different kinds of *knowledge*; diſtinguiſhing the *precious* from the *vile*, and fixing the true *eſtimate* of *each*. If there be any ſort of *truths*, whoſe *knowledge* does not promote, but *obſtruct* theſe great ends, *theſe* we are to deſpiſe and ſlight, to *ſhun* and *hate*. But if there be any *knowledge*, that does *neither* oppoſe nor hinder, *nor* yet contribute to

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these ends, unless accidentally, and very remotely; for *this* we may have *some*, but *no* very *great* regard or esteem. But whatever *knowledge* that be which is attended by these *fruits*, *this* is that which we are *to search for as for hidden treasure:* this is that which, when we have found it, we are to value above *the gold of Ophir*, *the topaz*, and *the carbuncle*, and *all precious stones*. The distinguishing *characters* then of *illuminating truths* are *four*.

1. They *purify* us.
2. They *nourish* and *strengthen* us.
3. They *entertain* and *delight* us.
4. They procure us a glorious *reward*.

1. They *purify us*. This is a property which the *royal Psalmist* frequently attributes to the *word of God*, that it is *pure* and *clean*, Psal. cxix. and elsewhere. And the *New Testament* frequently ascribes to *faith* and *hope*, that they *purify* the heart, 1 *John* iii. 3. *Acts* xv. And this sure is the first thing necessary to the *perfecting* the soul of man. 'Tis with the *soul*, as with the *body*; it must be first *cleansed* from hurtful humours, before it can be *fed* and *nourished*; *purged* of its errors and vices, ere it can be *enriched* with divine virtues, and *attain* that liberty and strength, wherein consists the true greatness and excellence of the

the mind of man. The *firſt ſtep* towards the *Perfection* of *virtue*, is the *relinquiſhing* our *vice*; for *we muſt ceaſe to do evil, ere we can learn to do good*: and the *firſt ſtep* towards the *Perfection* of *wiſdom*, is the *diſpelling* thoſe *errors*, which deceive and miſlead the mind, and pervert life. *What* theſe were in the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and what they are at *this* day in *us*, it is eaſy enough to diſcern. The *mind* of man, as far as I can obſerve, is naturally *prone* to *Religious* worſhip. Not only the conſideration of the wonderful mechaniſm and contrivance of the *world*, and of *events*, ſtrange, ſudden, and unaccountable; but alſo the conſcience of his own *impotence* and *obnoxiouſneſs*, inclining him to the belief, and prompting him to ſeek the patronage of an *inviſible all-ſufficient* power. In the next place, the mind of *man* is ever prone to propoſe to him ſome great, ſome ſovereign *good*; in which he may acquieſce, and by which he may ſecure himſelf as well as he can, againſt the indigence and poverty of his *nature*, and the changes and revolutions, the diſaſters and the miſeries, to which this *mortal ſtate* is expoſed. Theſe are two things of that importance, that no man can err in them, but the error muſt prove fatal to his repoſe. He that ſets up to himſelf for his ultimate end, an *empty*, and *uncertain* good, inſtead of a *ſolid* and

eternal

eternal one, muſt needs be as miſerably deluded and diſappointed, as *he* muſt, who ſets up to himſelf a *falſe God* inſtead of the true; or goes about to endear and recommend himſelf to the *true*, by a *falſe* and *ſuperſtitious* worſhip. Now in theſe points the *Jew* and *Gentile* were *miſerably*, though not *equally*, miſtaken. The *Gentiles* worſhipped *devils*, inſtead of *God:* their *myſteries* were either ſenſual or cruel; their *religion* did oftner encourage ſin than virtue. And as to their ſovereign *good*, their hearts were ſet upon *this world*, upon the pomp and pleaſure, upon the eaſe and honour of it; and they had either none, or very dark and uncertain proſpects beyond the *grave:* all beyond it was an unknown region, full of fables and idle phantoms. The *Jews*, though they enjoyed the *oracles of God*, and generally preſerved the worſhip of one *true* and *living God*, yet were they not free from very deplorable errors relating to theſe points; they ſeemed to have turned the *true God* into an *Idol*, and to have entertained ſome *notions* of *him* very repugnant to *his nature:* they looked upon him as *the God of the Jews, not of the Gentiles*; as a *reſpecter of perſons*, as fond and *partial* to the nation; and as delighted with a religion, made up of numerous *rites* and *ceremonies*, and *external* obſervances. And this could not but have a very ſad influence upon

upon their *religion*, as it really had; the *holineſs* which is truly acceptable to God, being neglected and aboliſhed; and *Sadduciſm* or *Phariſaiſm*, i. e. *ſenſuality* or *hypocriſy*, introduced in the room of it. And as to their ultimate *end* or ſupreme *good*, the *Sadducees* denied the *reſurrection*, *angels*, and *ſpirits*; and therefore 'tis not to be expected they ſhould entertain any deſign above the pleaſure of the *body*. And tho' the *Phariſees* acknowledged *angels* and a *reſurrection*, yet can we not diſcern that they had a real value for any thing beſides the honour, power, and wealth of this *world*. And no wonder, ſince they could, upon their *principles*, ſatisfy themſelves in a *religion* which had nothing of internal *purity* or ſolid *righteouſneſs* in it. So that upon the whole, the *Jew* and *Gentile* were alike wicked: only the wickedneſs of the *Jews* had this *aggravation* in it above that of the *Gentiles*, that they enjoyed the *oracles of God*, and the favour of a peculiar *covenant*. This being the ſtate of *darkneſs*, which lay upon the face of the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* world, our *Lord*, who was to be *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Iſrael*, advanced and eſtabliſhed in the world that doctrine, which directly tends to diſpel theſe errors, and reſcue mankind from the miſery that attends them.

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For all that the *goſpel* contains may be reduced to theſe *three* heads: *firſt*, the aſſertion of *one* only true *God*, with a bright and full *revelation* of his divine *Attributes* and *Perfection*. *Secondly*, an account of the *will of God*, or the *worſhip* he delights in, which is a *ſpiritual* one, together with ſuitable *means* and *motives*; in which laſt is contained a full *declaration* of *man*'s ſupreme *happineſs*. *Thirdly*, the *revelation of one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus; through whom we have acceſs with boldneſs to the throne of grace; through whom we have obtained from the Father, grace, and pardon, and adoption*; *and* thro' whom, *laſtly*, all our oblations and performances are *acceptable* to him. The *deſign* of this glorious manifeſtation was to *open* mens *eyes*, to *turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God*; *that they might obtain remiſſion of ſins*, and an *inheritance of glory*. Theſe then are the *truths* which *illuminated* the *Gentile* and *Jewiſh* world: and theſe are the *truths* which muſt *illuminate us* at *this* day. Theſe diſpel all deſtructive *errors* that lead us to vice or miſery: theſe point out our ſupreme *felicity*, and the direct *way* to it: theſe open and enlarge the *eye* of the *ſoul*, enable it to diſtinguiſh and judge with an unerring *exactneſs* between *good* and *evil*,

between *ſubſtantial* and *ſuperficial*, *temporal* and *eternal good*. And I wiſh from my ſoul, whatever *light* we pretend to at *this day*, we were well grounded and eſtabliſhed in *theſe truths*. I doubt, notwithſtanding our *belief* of *one God*, and *one Mediator*; and notwithſtanding we are well enough aſſured, that *God*, who is a *ſpirit*, *muſt be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth*; and notwithſtanding our pretending to believe a *life to come*; I ſay, I am afraid that notwithſtanding theſe things, we do generally err in *two* main points; namely, in the *notion* we ought to have of *religion*, and the *value* we are to ſet upon the *world* and the *body*. For who, that reflects upon the pomp and *pride* of *life*, upon the eaſe, the ſoftneſs and the luxury of it, upon the frothineſs and the freedom, the vanity and impertinence, to ſay no worſe, of *converſation*, will not conclude, that either we have renounced our *religion*, or form to ourſelves too complaiſant and indulgent a *notion* of it? for is *this* the imitation of *Jeſus*? is this to walk as *he* walked in the world? can this be the deportment of men to whom the world and the body is crucified? can ſuch a life as this flow from thoſe divine fountains, *faith*, *love*, and *hope*? *who* again can reflect upon the paſſion we diſcover for *ſuperiority* and *precedence*,

cedence, our thirſt of *power*, or ravenous deſire of *wealth*, and not conclude, that we have *miſtaken* our main *end*, that we ſet a wrong *value* upon *things*; and that whatever we talk of an *eternity*, we look upon this *preſent* world as our *portion*, and moſt valuable *good*? for can ſuch a tender concern for, ſuch an eager purſuit after, *temporal* things, flow from, nay conſiſt with, *purity of heart*, and *poverty of ſpirit*, the *love of God*, and a *deſire of heaven*? Whoever then will be *perfect* or *happy*, muſt carefully avoid both theſe *errors*: he muſt never think that *religion* can ſubſiſt, without the ſtrength and vigour of our *affections*: or, that the bent and vigour of our *ſouls*, can be pointed towards *God*, and yet the *air* of our *deportment* and *converſation* be earthly, ſenſual, and vain, conformed even to a *pagan pride*, and *ſhew* of *life*. *Next*, he muſt never cheriſh in himſelf the love of *this world*: he muſt never look upon himſelf other than a *ſtranger and pilgrim* in it: he muſt never be fond of the *pleaſure* of it: he muſt never form vain *deſigns* and *projects* about it, nor look upon the beſt things in it, as *ingredients* of our *happineſs*, but only as *inſtruments* of *virtue*, or ſhort *repaſts* and *refreſhments* in our journey. And becauſe all our *miſtakes* about the *nature*

ture and *Perfection* of *religion*, and the *value* of *temporal* things do generally arise from ἐυπερισ-ατ⊙ ἁμαρτία, that *peculiar* sin to which our *constitution* betrays us; therefore the *knowledge* of *our selves*, an intimate *acquaintance* with all our natural *propensions* and *infirmities*, is no inconsiderable part of *illumination*. For we shall never address our selves heartily to the *cure* of a *disease* which we know *nothing* of, or to the *rectifying* any *inclination*, till we are thoroughly convinced that 'tis *irregular* and *dangerous*.

2. The *second* character of *illuminating truths* is, that they are such as *feed* and *nourish*, *corroborate* and *improve* the mind of man. Now the properties of *bodily* strength are such as these: it enables us to baffle and repel injuries, to bear toil and travel, to perform difficult works with speed and ease; and finally, it prolongs life to a much further date, than weak and crazy constitutions can arrive at. And of all these we find some *resemblances* in *spiritual strength*; but as much more *perfect* and *excellent*, as the *spirit* is above the *body*. *These truths* then are indeed *illuminating*, which enable us to vanquish *temptations*, to *endure* with constancy and patience the toils and hardships of our Christian *warfare*, to discharge the *duties* of our station with zeal and vigour; and

which, laſtly, render us firm, ſteddy, and immortal. And theſe are the glorious effects which are attributed to the *truths of God*. Hence is the *goſpel* called the *power of God unto ſalvation*, Rom. i. 16. And hence it is, that we read of the *armour of God*, Epheſ. vi. 11. *The ſword of the ſpirit, the ſhield of faith, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs*, &c. to intimate to us the *ſtrength* and virtue of the *word of God*, and that it brings with it ſafety and ſucceſs. And hence it is that the *word of God* is ſaid to *quicken* and *ſtrengthen*; that *man* is ſaid *to live, not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*; that *righteouſneſs* is called *everlaſting*; and that he that *doth the will of God* is affirmed to *abide for ever:* to teach us plainly, that there is nothing ſteddy and unalterable, nothing durable, nothing eternal, but *God, divine truths*, and *thoſe* that are *formed* and *moulded* by them.

There are *truths* indeed which are merely *barren* and *unactive*, which amuſe and ſuſpend the mind, but never benefit it: but there are *others* which are, in the language of *Solomon*, like *health to the navel, and marrow to the bones:* wiſdom and virtue, life and honour, the favour of God and man, attend them where'er they dwell. And theſe are the *truths* which *illuminate:* truths that are active and fruitful; that

make us wiſe and good, perfect and happy: ſuch as we have a mighty intereſt in, ſuch as have a ſtrong influence upon us, ſuch as give a new *day* to the underſtanding, and new ſtrength and liberty to the will; ſuch as raiſe and exalt our affections, and render the whole man more rational, more ſteddy, more conſtant, more uniform. *Theſe* are the *truths* which make men great and modeſt in proſperity, erect and courageous in adverſity; always content with *this* world, yet always full of the hopes of a *better*: ſerene, calm, and well aſſured in the *preſent* ſtate of their ſouls, and yet thirſting after *Perfection*, *maturity*, and the abſolute *conſummation* of righteouſneſs in the *world to come*. Now the *truths* that effect all this, are all reducible to thoſe which I have mentioned under the former head: for in thoſe we find all that is *neceſſary to life and godlineſs*, to *virtue* and *glory*; in thoſe we find all that is neceſſary to raiſe and ſupport true *magnanimity*, to enlarge and free the mind, and to add ſtrength and courage to it. For what can more certainly promote all this, than *immortality* and *glory*? what can be a ſurer foundation for the hope of both to reſt on, than the favour of *God* himſelf? and what can more effectually reconcile and ingratiate us with *God*, than ſincere univerſal *righteouſneſs*, and the *mediation* of his dearly beloved *Son*?

3. The *third* character of *illuminating truths*, is, that they are *pleaſant* and *agreeable* to the ſoul. Hence it is, that the *royal Pſalmiſt* pronounces the *word of God ſweeter than the honey and the honey-comb*: that he aſcribes to it *delight* and *joy*; for he tells us, that *it rejoices the heart*, that *it enlightens the eyes*. And accordingly we find the true ſervants of God, not only continually bleſſing and praiſing God in the *temple*, but magnifying him by *Pſalms* and *Hymns* in their *priſons*, and *rejoicing* in the midſt of *tribulation*. But when I reckon *pleaſure* and *delight* amongſt the *fruits* of *Illumination*, I muſt add, that there is a vaſt difference between the *fits* and *flaſhes* of *mirth*, and the ſerenity of a *fixed* and *habitual delight*; between the *titillations* of *ſenſe*, and the ſolid *joys* of the *mind*; and laſtly, between the *pleaſures* of *fancy*, and of *reaſon*. And when I ſay, *Illumination* conſiſts in the *knowledge* of *pleaſant* and *agreeable truths*, I mean it of *rational* pleaſure, an *habitual* tranquillity of the mind; and then the matter is beyond queſtion. Whatever *truths* do contribute to promote *this*, the ſtudy and contemplation of *them* muſt be our true *wiſdom*. Joy, when 'tis ſolid and rational, does enlarge and exalt the mind of man; 'tis, as it were, *health to the navel, and marrow to the bones*; it renders us more thankful to God, more kind and courteous

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to man. 'Tis an excellent *preparation* to invite more *plentiful* influxes of the *Spirit of God.* Hence did *Elijah* call for a *muſical inſtrument* when he deſired to *prophesy:* and we find the company of *prophets* rejoicing with *hymns, muſick,* and *dances,* all *outward* teſtimonies of the *inward* tranſports and raviſhments of their *minds.* And as I am perſuaded that that which diſtinguiſhes a *godly* ſorrow, from a *worldly* or *impious* one, *repentance* and *contrition,* from the agonies and perplexities of *deſpair,* is the *peace* and *tranquillity* which attends it; ſo am I perſuaded, that *God* does preſs and invite us to *mourning* and *ſorrow* for *ſin,* for *this* reaſon, not excluding *others,* becauſe it naturally leads on to *peace* and *joy:* a ſoft and tender *ſorrow* diſſipating the fears and diſtreſſes of *guilt,* like mild and fruitful *ſhowers,* that do lay *ſtorms.* In a word, there is no ſuch powerful antidote againſt *ſin,* nor ſpur to holy *induſtry,* as holy *pleaſure,* pious *joy,* or ſpiritual *peace* and *tranquillity.* This is a partaking or anticipating the *powers of the world to come;* and the mightieſt corroboration of every thing that is good in us. The *ſtudy* then of *ſuch truths,* is true *wiſdom.* And *Illumination* thus far will conſiſt in quitting thoſe *errors* which beget melancholy, ſuperſtition, deſperation; and in ſuch *truths,* as enlarge our view of the divine Perfec-

tions, and exhibit to us a nearer preſence of his goodneſs and glory: *ſuch*, again, as unfold the dignity of human nature, and the wiſe and gracious ends of our creation: *ſuch*, laſtly, as extend our proſpect, and enlarge our hopes; ſupport our frailties, and excite our vigour.

4. The *laſt property* of thoſe *truths* in the knowledge of which *Illumination* conſiſts, is, that they are ſuch as procure us a *reward*. If we reflect upon thoſe *three* heads under which I ranged thoſe *truths*, which *illuminated* the *Gentiles* and *Jewiſh* world, we ſhall eaſily diſcern how well they fit this character: they fill the mind with *joy* and *peace*, and make it abound in *hope*; they purge the man from his natural corruption, and fortify the mind againſt ſuch impreſſions, from outward good or evil in this world, as diſquiet and torment the ſinner; they procure him the protection of God's providence, and the aſſiſtance of his ſpirit in *this* life, and they invite him to hope for *glories* and pleaſures in *another*, far above any thing that *the heart of man can conceive*. *God* is *the God of hope*; he has all *fu[illegible]* and *ſufficiency in himſelf*: and therefore *bleſſed* muſt all *they be, who have the Lord for their God. Jeſus* is the fountain of all *conſolation*: *He is made unto us of God, wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption*:

happy

happy is he that does *rejoice* always, and *glory* in *him*. *Righteouſneſs* is a ſtate of *health* and *ſtrength*, of *Perfection* and *beauty*, of *peace* and *tranquillity*, of *reſt* and *hope*: *bleſſed* are they who are poſſeſſed of it, who are made *free from ſin, and become ſervants of God*, who *have their fruits unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life*. Such are already *paſſed from death to life*; for the *ſpirit of life and holineſs, of God and glory, reſts upon them*. This is the character that diſtinguiſhes *goſpel* knowledge from all other ſorts of knowledge. No knowledge of *arts* and *ſciences*, and much leſs the moſt exquiſite knowledge of all the *myſteries* of the *kingdom of darkneſs*, can pretend to an eternal *reward*. A ſhort and impure *pleaſure*, and a tranſient *intereſt* is all that *this* ſort of *knowledge* can beſtow, and very often, inſtead of *pleaſure* and *profit*, it requites its diſciples with *pain* and *trouble*. The *goſpel* only contains thoſe *truths*, which confer *life and immortality* on thoſe that believe and obey them. 'Tis the *goſpel* alone that teaches us how we are to gain the love and favour of *God*; and 'tis *God* alone who *rules* and *governs* the viſible and inviſible *world*. He therefore alone is to be *feared*; and *he* alone is to be *loved*. *Fear not them*, ſaith our Saviour, *Matth.* x. 28. *which kill the body, but are not able*

to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. And St. *John* gives the *same precept* concerning the *world: Love not the world, neither the things of the world:* and backs it by the same reason; *for the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.* That is, the *world* can at best but gratify for a *moment* the appetites of the *body*, or the desires of a sensual *fancy*; therefore *love* it *not*; but *love* the *Father*, who, after the dissolution of the vital union betwixt *soul* and *body*, is able to confer *life* and *happiness* on both to all *eternity*.

Thus I have considered the *characters* of *illuminating truths*. And the *whole* of what I have said amounts to these *two* things. 1. There are *truths* of very *different* kinds: *truths* that are of *no use*; such are those which are either *trifling* or merely *notional*, and can have no influence on human life: *truths* that are of *ill use*; such are those of which consist the arts of *sensuality*, *avarice*, *vanity* and *ambition*: *these* are to be detested, the *former* to be *contemned* by all that seek after true *wisdom*. *Again*, there are *truths* of an *inferior use*; such as concern our *fortunes*, our *relations*, our *bodies*: and these may be allowed their *proper place*, and a *reasonable value*.

But

But the *truths* which concern the peace and pleaſure, ſtrength and liberty of our *ſouls*; which procure us the *favour of God*, and the *grace* of his *ſpirit*; the *truths*, in a word, which ſecure our *temporal* and *eternal* happineſs; theſe are *illuminating truths*, theſe have a *tranſcendent* worth, and *inæſtimable* excellence, or uſefulneſs, and conſequently can never be too *dear* to us.

2. Since the great *characters* of *illuminating truths* do exactly *fit* the *goſpel of Jeſus*, 'tis plain, that *this* is that *ſyſtem of knowledge*, which we are to *ſtudy day and night*; *this* is that *divine philoſophy*, whoſe *principles* and *laws* we muſt inceſſantly revolve and ponder. 'Tis not without reaſon, that the *Pſalmiſt* beſtows ſuch glorious *elogies* upon the *word of God*, Pſal. xix. and elſewhere: that he magnifies one while the intrinſick excellence and beauty, another while the force and efficacy of it; and ever and anon enlarges himſelf upon the advantages, the unſpeakable advantages, which reward the meditation and practice of it. *Of all Perfections I have ſeen an end; but thy commandments are exceeding broad. They are pure, they endure for ever; they enlighten the eyes, and rejoice the heart. Moreover by them thy ſervant is warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.* That is, by them we are preſerved from all *real evil*, and put in poſſeſſion of, or entitled to all

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real good. How well did St. *Peter* anſwer, when our *Lord* aſked his diſciples, *will ye alſo go from me? Lord, whither ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life.* And how wiſely did St. *Paul* reſolve, *to know nothing but Chriſt Jeſus and him crucified? For he is the way, the truth, and the life*; and in *him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.*

But after all, as there is a *form of godlineſs*, ſo there is a *form of knowledge*, without the *power of it.* The knowledge of the *ſame truths*, as I obſerved in the beginning, in *different perſons*, may be very *different*, as meeting with a very *different reception.* Our *conceptions* may be more clear or confuſed, more lively or faint, more perfect or maimed; and our *aſſent* may be ſtronger or weaker. In ſome they may only float ſuperficially, in *others* they may penetrate deeper: and the degrees of their *influence* and *operation* will be certainly proportioned to the different manner of their *reception.* For this reaſon it will be neceſſary to the right underſtanding of a *ſtate* of *illumination*, to diſcourſe,

2. Of the *nature* of that *knowledge* we muſt have of the *former truths*; to ſhew, *what* ſort of *conception* we muſt form of them, and what kind of *aſſent* we muſt pay them, and what kind of *conſideration* we muſt employ about them. As I have therefore

fore laid down the *properties* of thoſe *truths*, ſo will I now lay down the *properties* of that *knowledge* of *them*, which is eſſential to *illumination*.

1. *Illuminating knowledge* muſt be deeply *rooted*. This our *Saviour* has taught us in that *parable*, wherein he has obſerved to us, that the *ſeed which had not depth of earth*, as it *ſoon ſprang up*, ſo it *ſoon withered* and *dried away*. We often know (or pretend to do ſo) the *rudiments* of our *religion*, without the *grounds* and *foundation* of it. We embrace *concluſions*, without examining the *principles* from whence they flow; and contrary to the advice of the *apoſtle*, we are *unable to give a reaſon to any one that aſketh us of the faith, and the hope that is in us*. And then *ours* is not properly *knowledge*, but *opinion*; 'tis not *faith*, but *credulity*: 'tis not a firm *perſuaſion*, but an *eaſy cuſtomary* aſſent. And this is overthrown by every *temptation*; defaced or much blurred by every *atheiſtical ſuggeſtion* or *prophane ſubjection*. Does the *world* or our *luſt* tempt us, as the *devil* did our *firſt parents*, *ye ſhall not ſurely die?* How eaſily is that *faith* ſhaken, which is *no better founded?* How eaſily is a man induced to hope, that *ſin* is not very *fatal* and *pernicious*, that *God* will eaſily be prevailed with to *pardon* it, that the *flames of hell* are *metaphorical*, and its *eternity a miſtaken* notion and *groundleſs* fancy,

fancy, if he be ignorant of the true *reaſons of God's wrath* and *indignation*, which are founded in the very *nature of God* and *ſin?* Whereas, on the *other* hand, he that well underſtands *both* theſe; the deformity and tendency of ſin, and the holineſs and the purity of the divine Nature, cannot but *diſcern* an irreconcileable *oppoſition* between them; and be convinced that were there *no tribunal* erected for the *ſinner*, yet would *ſin* be its *own puniſhment*; and that an intolerable *hell*, conſiſting in the *diſorder of nature*, and *exclusion of God*, &c. would be the natural and neceſſary *iſſue* of it. The *ſum* of this argument is, *that knowledge*, which has no deep *root*, is ſubject to be overthrown by every *blaſt: that faith*, which is little more than *credulity*, does very ſeldom ſtand againſt any very rude *ſhock*. Now the *grounds* of our *faith* and *duty* are fully and clearly expounded in the *goſpel:* and here eſpecially we muſt *ſeek* them. When I ſay *this*, I reject no *collateral* arguments, I refuſe no *foreign* aids, which contribute any thing to *confirm* and *fortify* our belief of *goſpel truths*. The *faith* of St. *Thomas* did, in part at leaſt, depend upon the evidence of *ſenſe*; *Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen thou haſt believed*, John xx. 29. And ſo did that of the *reſt* of them, who were *eye-witneſſes* of the

the *reſurrection* and *aſcenſion* of the *bleſſed Jeſus*. The *doctrine* of *one God*, and a *judgment to come*, may receive much *light* and *ſtrength* from *natural reaſon:* and whatever *eſtabliſhes* a *revealed truth*, will be ſo far from diminiſhing, that it will increaſe the *virtue* and *efficacy* of it. All the *caution* I think fit to give here is, that we be ſure that the ground be plain and firm on which we build the belief of an *illuminating truth*. *Philoſophy*, in many caſes, is clear and convictive: St. *Paul* himſelf amongſt the *Gentiles*, frequently appeals to *reaſon*. But too often we call our *fancy philoſophy*; and obtrude upon the world, the wild and undigeſted *theories* of a warm and confident *imagination*, for new *diſcoveries*. What ſtrange *ſtuff* was *Gnoſtick philoſophy once?* What did it produce but the *corruption* of the *Chriſtian faith?* And what can be expected from *myſtick enthuſiaſtick philoſophy* or *divinity* in *any* age, any man may gueſs, without any deep penetration. Nor do I doubt but that all judicious and experienced men, do as much deſpiſe and nauſeate the blendures and mixtures of pretended *philoſophy* with our *faith* and *morals*, as the world generally does the *ſubtilties* and *perplexities* of the *ſchools*. For my part, I can't endure to have my *religion* lean upon the rotten *props* of *precarious* notions. I admire, I love the *elevations*

vations and *enlargements* of ſoul: but I can have no value for unaccountable *amuſements* or *rambles* of *fancy*. An itch of *novelty* or *curioſity* has a tincture in it of our *original corruption*. I ever ſuſpect an *opinion* that carries an *air* of *novelty* in it; and do always prefer a *vulgar truth* before *refined error*. They are *vulgar truths*, which, like *vulgar bleſſings*, are of *moſt uſe*, and *trueſt worth:* and ſurely our *Saviour* thought ſo, when he *thanked his Father, that he had hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and revealed them unto babes*. And when he himſelf taught the people *with power and authority, and not as the ſcribes*, he did advance no ſubtil *theories*, but bright and dazzling, uſeful and convictive *truths*. This minds me of another *property* of *illuminating knowledge*.

2. This *knowledge* muſt not be obſcure and confuſed, but *diſtinct* and *clear*. Where the images of things are ſlight, faint, and vaniſhing, they move men but very weakly, and affect them but very coldly; eſpecially in ſuch matters as are not ſubject to our ſenſes. And this I perſuade myſelf is one chief *reaſon why* thoſe glorious and wonderful *objects, God*, a *judgment to come, heaven*, and *hell*, do ſtrike us ſo *feebly* and operate ſo little. We have generally no lively, diſtinct, and clear *conception* of them: It being otherwiſe impoſſible, that things

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in their own *nature dreadful* and *amazing*, ſhould excite in us *no fear*; or that things in their own *nature* infinitely *amiable*, ſhould inkindle in us *no paſſion, no deſire*. The *notions* we have of *ſpiritual* and *inviſible* things are *dim, duſky*, and *imperfect*: our *thoughts* paſs over them ſo *ſlightly*, that they ſcarce retain any *print* or *traces* of them. Now this ſort of *knowledge* will never do the work. Theſe drowſy notices of things will never ferment and raiſe our *paſſions* for *heaven* high enough to confront and combat thoſe we have for the *world*. From hence we may give a fair account, what the uſe is of *prophetick retirement*, and *prophetick eloquence*: what is the purpoſe of all thoſe *ſchemes* and *tropes*, which occur in *inſpired writings*: and why the beſt of men have ever ſo much affected *ſolitude* and *retreats*, from the noiſe and the hurry of the world. Serious, frequent, and devout *contemplation* is neceſſary to form in our minds, clear, diſtinct, and ſprightly *notions*: and to *communicate* theſe well to the world, they muſt be expreſſed in *moving* language, in *living* tropes and figures. Ah! did we but conſider this, we ſhould ſure allot more *time* to the *ſtudy* of *divine truths*; and we ſhould not think, that to diſcover them *throughly*, it were enough to let our thoughts *glance* upon them. But we ſhould ſurvey and

and ponder them with all the *exactneſs* and *diligence* that were neceſſary to make laſting and diſtinct *impreſſions* upon us. Could we know by *intuition*, doubtleſs wonderful *objects* would raiſe very extraordinary *paſſions* in us. But this we cannot, let us come as near it as we can: only let us avoid forming *abſurd* and *falſe* notions of things, whilſt we endeavour after *diſtinct* and *clear* ones. *Spiritual* things do not anſwer *corporeal*, like *face* to *face* in a glaſs: and therefore, tho' to give ſome light to things that are *above* us, we may find out all the *reſemblances* of them we can in *thoſe* things we are acquainted with *here below*; yet we muſt ſtill remember, that the *one* do vaſtly exceed the *other*, and that we cannot thus get a juſt, adequate *notion* of them.

3. This *knowledge* muſt not lie in the underſtanding, *crude* and *undigeſted*; but it muſt be throughly *concocted* and turned into *nouriſhment*, *blood*, and *ſpirits*. We muſt know the true *value* and *uſe* of every *principle*, of every *truth*; and be able readily to *apply* them. For what does it ſignify, how important *truths* are in themſelves, if they are not ſo to me? What does it avail that they are impregnated with *life* and *power*, if I *feel* not any ſuch influence? Of what uſe is the knowledge of *goſpel-promiſes* to *me*, if I reap no *comfort* from them?

Or

Or the knowledge of *goſpel-threats*, if they are unable to *curb* and *reſtrain* my paſſions? And ſo is it with other *truths:* what will it avail me that I *know*, the *life of man conſiſts not in the multitude of the things which he poſſeſſes*, if notwithſtanding I *cannot content* myſelf with a *competency?* That *righteouſneſs* is the chief *good*, and the richeſt *treaſure* of the ſoul of man, if notwithſtanding I ſeek *this world*, and the *things* of it, with a more *early* and *paſſionate* concern? That *ſin* and *pain* are the moſt *conſiderable*, if not *only*, *evils* of man, if notwithſtanding I be *caſt down* and *broken* under every *adverſity?* And thus I might go on, and ſhew you, that the *knowledge* which is not digeſted into *nouriſhment* is, if not a burden, of no benefit to us. 'Tis plain, *that* is to *me* nothing worth, which I make *no uſe* of. We muſt then follow the advice of *Solomon*, and never quit the ſearch and meditation of *truth*, till we grow *intimate* and *familiar* with it: and ſo have it always ready for a *guide* and *guard* for our *ſupport* and *ſtrength*, and for our *delight* and *pleaſure*. We muſt *bind it about our heart*, as he ſpeaks, *and tie it as an ornament about our neck. Then, when we go forth it ſhall lead us, when we ſleep it ſhall keep us, and when we awake it ſhall talk with us: for the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of inſtruction are the way of life*, Prov.

vi. In a word, nothing can render the moſt important *truths* powerful and operative in us, but ſuch a *digeſtion* of them by ſerious and devout *meditation*, as may in a manner *incorporate* them with us. And this the *ſcripture* plainly teaches, when to ſignify the force and virtue of the *goſpel* above that of the law, it uſes theſe words: *For this is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts*, Heb. viii. 10. intimating, that no *laws*, no *principles* can ever influence us, till they be deeply *imprinted* in our hearts.

To *wind up* all. There are *ſeveral* kinds of *knowledge* of the *ſame truths:* there is a *knowledge*, which ſerves us only as *Piſga's* top did *Moſes*; to *ſhew* us *Canaan*, but not to *bring us* into it. There is again a *knowledge*, which ſerves us only as the *talent* did the *wicked ſervants*; not to procure *rewards*, but *puniſhments*. And finally, there is a *knowledge*, which, like the *talents* in the hand of the *faithful* and *good ſteward*, *inriches* us *firſt*, and *recommends* us *afterwards* to *higher* truſt and dignities; which *improves* and *perfects* our *nature* firſt, and then puts us into *poſſeſſion* of ſuch bleſſings, as only *nature* thus *improved* and *perfected* is capable of. And this *knowledge* muſt not be a ſlight, ſuperficial and undigeſted one;

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it muſt not be a confuſed and obſcure, a weak and imperfect one: *this* is *not the knowledge* which will bring forth thoſe excellent *fruits*, which we have reaſon to expect from true *illumination*. But it muſt be a *knowledge* that has all the quite *contrary* characters: even ſuch as I have *before* deſcribed at large. That *this* is an *obſervation* of the greateſt weight and moment is *evident* to any one who will give himſelf leave to make any *reflection* on the *preſent* ſtate of *Chriſtianity*. For how does the power of *darkneſs* prevail amidſt the *light* of the goſpel? How has the *devil* erected *his throne* in the midſt of that *Church*, which ſhould be the *kingdom of God?* and ſin and death *reign* where life and immortality are *preached? Whence* is this? Are men *ignorant* of thoſe *truths* which make up the ſyſtem of the true *wiſdom? This* is *not* eaſy to be *imagined*; ſcarcely of the darkeſt corners of the *popiſh* churches, much leſs of ours. And therefore we muſt conclude, that this is becauſe our *knowledge* is not *ſuch* as it *ought* to be, with reſpect to its *clearneſs*, *certainty*, and *digeſtion*.

CHAP II.

Of the fruits *and* attainment *of illumination. That illumination does not depend so much upon a man's* outward fortune, extraordinary *parts,* acquired learning, *&c. as upon his moral* qualifications, *such as* humility, impartiality, *and love* of the truth. *Four directions for the attainment of illumination.* 1. *That we do not suffer our minds to be engaged in quest of knowledge* foreign *to our purpose.* 2. *That we apply ourselves with a very tender and sensible concern to the study of illuminating truths.* 3. *That we act conformable to those* measures *of light which we have attained.* 4. *That we frequently address our selves to God by* prayer *for the illumination of his grace. The chapter concluded with a prayer of* Fulgentius.

HAving dispatched the *notion* of *illumination* in the foregoing *chapter,* and shewed both what *truths,* and what sort of *knowledge* of them is requisite to it; I am next to treat,

1. Of the *fruits:* and
2. Of the *attainment* of it.

§. 1. As to the *fruits* of *illumination,* I have the less need to insist upon *them,* because whatever can be said on *this* head, has been

been in a manner *anticipated:* all the characters of *illuminating truths* and *illuminating knowledge* being such as sufficiently declare the blessed *effects* of *true illumination.* I will therefore be very *short* on *this head*; and only just *mention two advantages* of *illumination.* As the use of *light* is especially *twofold,* to *delight* and *guide* us; so do we reap *two benefits* from *illumination.*

1. The *first* and most immediate one is, that it *sets* the whole man, and the whole life *right*; that it fixes our *affections* on their proper and natural *object,* and directs all our *actions* to their true *end.* I do not mean, that the *understanding* constantly and necessarily *influences* and *determines* the *will. Experience* tells us, that we have a *fatal liberty:* that our *affections* are too often *independent* of our *reason:* that we *sin* against the dictates of *conscience*; that we pursue *false pleasure,* and a *false interest,* in opposition to the *true,* and in plain opposition to our *judgment* too; at least to a *sedate* and *calm* one. And the *reason* of all this is, because we consist of *two* different and repugnant *principles,* a *body* and a *soul:* and are solicited by *two different worlds,* a *temporal* and an *eternal* one. But all this notwithstanding, 'tis certain that *illumination* in the mind has a mighty influence upon us: for it is continually exciting in us wise *desires* and excellent *purposes.* 'Tis always

alluring and inviting us towards our sovereign *good*, and restraining and deterring us from *sin* and *death:* it alarms, disquiets, disturbs, and persecutes us as often as we err and wander from the path of life. In one word, the great *work* of *illumination* is, to be always representing the beauties and pleasures, and the beatitude and glory of *virtue*; and remonstrating the evils and dishonours, the deformities and dangers of *vice:* so that a man will never be at rest, who has this *light* within him, till it be either *extinguished* or *obeyed*.

2. This *light* within us, if it be followed and complied with, not muddied and disturbed; if it be not quenched and extinguished by wilful sin, or unpardonable oscitancy and remissness: if, in a word, its influence be not interrupted, disperses all our *fears* as well as *errors*, creates an unspeakable *tranquillity* in the soul, spreads over us a calm and glorious *sky*, and makes every thing in us and about us look *gay*, *verdant* and *beautiful*. The *dissipation* of *Pagan darkness*, and all participation or resemblances of *it*; *deliverance* from a state of *bondage* and *wrath*, the *peace of God*, the *love of Jesus*, the *fellowship of the Holy Ghost*, the *immortality of the soul*, *the resurrection of the body*, the *perfection and blessedness of eternity*; *good God! what* surprizing, what ravishing *themes* are these for the thoughts

thoughts of an *enlightned* ſoul to dwell upon! bleſſed and happy is he who enjoys this *pleaſure* upon earth. And that *we may*, I am now to diſcourſe,

§. 2. Of the *attainment* of *illumination*. Now whatever advice can relate to *this*, may be reduced under *two* heads:

1. *What qualifications* do render man *capable* of *illumination*.
2. *What* it is that one duly qualified is to *do* in *purſuit* of it.

§. 1. To begin with the *qualification* requiſite to *illumination*. *One* man is diſtinguiſhed from *another* ſeveral ways: by his *eſtate* or *fortune*, by *natural* or *acquired endowments*, and by *moral diſpoſitions*: and each of theſe may have ſome, tho' a very different influence upon human *Perfection*. For if we inquire after only the *eſſence* and *integrity of Perfection*; then are there *two* or *three moral qualifications*, which are all that is required in order to this: but if we inquire after the *largeneſs* of its ſtature, the *ſymmetry* of its features, the *luſtre* of its complexion, and the *elegance* of its dreſs; then may we allow ſomething to be aſcribed to *fortune*, to *nature*, and a liberal *education*. This is an *obſervation* very *neceſſary* to be made. For tho' *every* man may be

capable of *Perfection*, that is, *habitual holiness*, if it be not his own fault; yet is not *every* man capable of being *equally* perfect, because of that accidental *variety* which I have suggested, and which flows from *different gifts of God*, which depend *not* on *our selves*. This being premised; in order to prevent my being mistaken, I proceed, and determine,

1. That *illumination* depends not upon a man's *outward fortune*. There are indeed *several* sorts of *knowledge*, which we can never arrive at without much *leisure*, and much *expence*: and in order to support the one, and enjoy the other, it is requisite that we be masters of a *good fortune*. Hence is that *observation* of the *author of the Ecclesiasticus*, chap. xxxviii. 24. *The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure; and he that has little business shall become wise*. And therefore in the following verses he excludes the *husbandman*, the *statuary*, the *engraver*, the *smith*, the *potter*; and all consequently whose time and mind is taken up in the *labours* of their *profession*, and in making the necessary *provision* for *life*, these, I say, he excludes from all pretensions to *wisdom*. *How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, whose talk is of bullocks*, &c. But *this* is not the *wisdom* that I am inquiring after, and which constitutes *illumination*. *That* consists

not

not in the laws of our *earthly*, but *heavenly* country: not in *arts* and *ſciences*, which relate to the *body*, and miniſter to a *temporal* life; but in thoſe *divine truths*, which purify the *ſoul*, and miniſter to an *eternal one*: no, not in *notional improvements* of the *mind*, but in *ſpiritual* and *vital ones*. And therefore the *huſbandman* and the *artiſt*, the *mechanick* and the *trader*, are as capable of this ſort of *wiſdom*, as the man of *office*, *money*, or *quality*. There needs no *wealth* to render one the *child of light and of the day*. There is the *book of nature*, the *book of revelation*; *both the books of God*, *both writ* throughout with glorious *illuminating* truths: *theſe* lie wide *open* to every honeſt Chriſtian. The being and nature of God; the mediation of Jeſus, and a judgment to come; the nature and neceſſity of holineſs, are fully *revealed*, and unanſwerably *proved*. And though every honeſt man be not able to diſcover all the *arguments* on which they ſtand, yet may he diſcover *enough*: and what is more, he may have an *inward*, *vital*, *ſenſible* proof of them; he may *feel* the power, the *charms* of *holineſs*, *experiment* its *congruity* and *loveline ſs* to the *human* ſoul; and obſerve a thouſand demonſtrations of its *ſerviceableneſs* to the *honour* of God, and the *good* of *mankind*: he may have a full and convictive ſenſe of the *manifeſtation* of the *divine Perfections*

fections in the great work of our *redemption*; and the excellent *tendency* of it may be ſo palpable and conſpicuous to him, as to leave no room for *doubts* or *ſcruples*. But beſides all this, there is a *voice within*, there is a *divine teacher* and *inſtructor*, which will *ever abide with him*, and *lead him into all neceſſary truths*: all which is implied in *thoſe* words of our Lord, *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf*, John vii. 17.

2. Extraordinary *natural parts*, ſuch as ſagacity or acuteneſs of judgment, ſtrength of memory, the livelineſs of imagination, are not neceſſary to *illumination*. The *goſpel*, as I remember, takes *no notice* of *theſe*. Such is the *beauty* of *holineſs*, that it requires rather *purity* of *heart*, than *quickneſs of apprehenſion*, to render us *enamoured* of it. And the very ſame thing may be ſaid of the *power* and *energy* of all *goſpel motives*, and of the *proofs* and *evidences* too of *divine truths*. To *convince* and *affect* us, there is no need of ſagacity and penetration, but *probity* and *ſincerity*. However, I have *two* or *three reflections* to make here, which may not be unuſeful: for though *acuteneſs* and *retention*, by which I mean quickneſs in *diſcerning*, and firmneſs in *preſerving* truth, be commonly accounted *natural parts*, and generally are

ſo;

ſo; yet, I think, where the *one* or the *other* are moſt *defective*, they may be much *helped* and wonderfully *improved*. To which end I remark, *firſt*, that thoſe *defects* of *underſtanding* or *memory*, which *ſome* are wont to accuſe themſelves of in *ſpiritual* things, are with more *juſtice* to be imputed to *want* of *concern* and *affection* for *ſuch* things, than to any incapacity of *nature*. 'Tis plain we eaſily *underſtand*, and eaſily *remember*, what we *deſire* and *love*: and where-ever we follow the impulſe or conduct of *ſtrong inclinations*, we ſeldom fail of *excelling*. Let us therefore take care, that our *hearts* be *ſet* upon the *things* of *God*; and we ſhall ſoon ſee that our *judgment* and *memory* will no more fail us *here*, than in thoſe *worldly intereſts* and *pleaſures*, which we are moſt intent upon. *Secondly*, As to *memory*; it depends very much upon the *perſpicuity*, *regularity*, and *order* of our notions. Many complain of want of *memory*, when the defect is in their *judgment*. And *others*, while they graſp at *all*, retain *nothing*. In order then to relieve this *infirmity* of *memory*, it were an excellent way to *confine* our ſearch and *meditation* to a *few objects*, and to have theſe *clearly* and *methodically* handled. A *catechetical* way of expounding and aſſerting the *rudiments* of our faith, if done as it ought to be, is of great ſervice to perſons of *all capacities*; but

but eſpecially to thoſe of *meaner*. For *thus* they may not only be enriched with the *knowledge* of the moſt *uſeful* things, and of the *grounds* on which our obligation either to *belief* or *practice* is bottomed; but alſo may be furniſhed with general *principles* of *reaſon*, by which they may ſteer their *judgment* in all caſes; and with certain *heads* of *faith* and *morals*, to which they may be able to reduce moſt of what they *read* or *hear*. *Thirdly*, 'Tis with the underſtanding as with the eye of the body: *one* ſees *further* off, and in a *fainter light*: but *another* ſees as *well* with regard to all the *uſes* of life, who yet requires that the objects ſhould be *nearer*, and the light *better*. Men of *ſlow* capacities muſt not be *daring* or *precipitate* in paſſing their *ſentence* and forming their *notions*. They muſt *examine*, whether the matters they *enquire* after be not too *remote* and *obſcure*: whether the object may be brought *nearer*, and placed in a better *light*; or whether they may be furniſhed with *teleſcopes* or *microſcopes* fit for them. If *not*, they muſt quit the ſearch of *ſuch* truths as are *improper* and *unneceſſary* for *them*: by which means they will, at leaſt, avoid being *deceived* or *perplexed*; which is no ſmall *advantage*. To be enriched with a kind of *univerſal knowledge* is a *great* thing; but I doubt *too great* for *man*. *Next* to this is, to be endowed with a knowledge of *neceſſary* and

and *important truths*; and to be *freed* from *errors* and *perplexity* in matters of any *moment:* and methinks it were no great exceſs of *modeſty* or *humility*, for *man* to be *content* with *this*.

3. There is no great need of *acquired learning*, in order to true *illumination*. Our *Saviour* did not exact of his *diſciples*, as a neceſſary preparation for his doctrine, the *knowledge* of *tongues*; the *hiſtory of times*, or *nature*, *logick*, *metaphyſicks*, *mathematicks*, or the like. *Theſe* indeed may be *ſerviceable* to *many* excellent *ends:* they may be great *accompliſhments* of the mind; great ornaments, and very engaging *entertainments* of life: they may be, finally, very excellent and neceſſary *inſtruments* of, or *introductions* to *ſeveral profeſſions* or *employments*. But as to *Perfection* and happineſs, to *theſe* they can never be *indiſpenſably* neceſſary. A man may be excellently, habitually *good*, without more *languages* than *one:* he may be fully perſuaded of thoſe great *truths*, that will render him maſter of his paſſions, and independent of the world; that will render him eaſy and uſeful in *this* life, and glorious in *another*, though he be no *logician* nor *metaphyſician*. Yet would I not all this while be ſuppoſed to exclude the uſe of true *reaſon* and ſolid *judgment*. Tho' the *meaneſt* capacity may attain to its proper *Perfection*; that is, ſuch a meaſure of *knowledge*,

ledge, as may make the man truly *wiſe* and *happy*; yet the more *capacious* any man's *ſoul* is, and the more *enlarged* his *knowledge*, the more *perfect* and *happy* he.

4. The *qualifications* previouſly neceſſary to *Illumination*, are *two* or *three moral* ones, implied in that *infant temper* our *Saviour* required in thoſe who would be his *diſciples*. Theſe are *humility*, *impartiality*, and *a thirſt* or *love* of *truth*. *Firſt*, *Humility*. He that will be *taught of God* muſt not be *proud* or *confident* in *himſelf*. He muſt not *over-rate* his own *parts* and *capacity*; nor lean too ſtiffly to his *own underſtanding*. He muſt firmly believe, that *illumination* is the *work of God*; and on *him* he muſt depend. He muſt confeſs the *weakneſs* of his own *faculties*, the natural *poverty* and *indigence* of his *underſtanding*; and ſo look up to *God*, who is the fountain of *wiſdom*, and giveth *grace to the humble, but reſiſteth the proud*. Secondly, *Impartiality*, *ſincerity*, or a certain *purity* or *innocence of judgment*, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo. That the *underſtanding* may be *capable* of *divine light*, it muſt not be blurred and ſtained by *falſe principles*: it muſt not be biaſs'd nor influenced by any *corrupt inclinations*. Some to prove their *impartiality* or *freedom* of judgment, abandon themſelves to the ſcrupulouſneſs of *ſcepticiſm*, and a wanton itch of endleſs *diſputation* and *contradiction*. But I cannot think

think it neceſſary to our *freedom* and *impartiality*, to deny the *evidence* of our ſenſe; to oppoſe the *univerſal reaſon* of *mankind*; and to ſhake off all *reverence* for the integrity of *man*, and the *veracity of God*. No, this ſavours too much, either of *oſtentation*, or of a raw and unexperienced *affectation* of new theories and ſpeculations. *He* ſecures his *freedom* ſufficiently, who guards his *reaſon* againſt the force of groundleſs *prepoſſeſſions*, and ſenſeleſs *modes* and *cuſtoms*; againſt the *luſt* of the body, and the *prejudices* of *parties*; who keeps a ſtrict eye upon the motions and tendencies of his *inferiour* nature; who admits not the dictates of a *ſingle perſon* or *party* for *Catholick reaſons*; who conſiders, that there are *revolutions* of *philoſophy* and *opinions* as well as of *ſtates* and *kingdoms*; and judges well of *times* and *men*, ere he pay much deference to *authority*. But, *thirdly*, this is not all that is neceſſary to any *compleat* degree of *Illumination*. *Impartiality* is neceſſary to the firſt *dawning* of it; but if we would have it encreaſe, and diffuſe itſelf into a *perfect day* of ſpiritual *wiſdom* and *underſtanding*, we muſt *hunger* and *thirſt* after *truths*. An *unprejudiced* mind is neceſſary to qualify us for the firſt *rudiments* of *truth*; but we muſt be enflamed with *deſire* and *love* of it, ere we ſhall enter into the *ſanctuary* or *receſſes* of it: therefore our *Saviour* invites

to him *every one that thirſts*, John vii. 27. And St. *Peter* exhorts us, *as new born babes, to deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby*, 1 Epiſt. ii. 2. And St. *Paul* imputes the damnation of *thoſe that periſh, to want of love of the truth*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 10. 'Tis too *trifling* to *object* here, how come we to *thirſt* after what we do not *know?* for it concerns *every man* to *enquire* what will *become* of him *for ever:* and if he be already *aſſured* that there is *another world* and a glorious *ſalvation* to be attained, it is *natural* to *thirſt* after the *reſolution* of ſuch queſtions as theſe, *what* ſhall I *do* to be *ſaved? what* ſhall I *do* to inherit an *eternal life?* and ſuch is the *beauty* of *illuminating truth*, that every *glance* of it kindles in our hearts the love of it; and ſuch its *boundleſs Perfection*, that the more we *know*, the more ſtill ſhall we *deſire to know*. Having thus conſidered what *qualifies* man for *Illumination*, my *next* buſineſs is to enquire,

§. 2. *What*

§. 2. *What* one thus qualified is to *do* for the actual *attainment* of it. All the advice that I can think fit here to be given, may be reduced to *four* heads.

1. That we do not ſuffer our minds to be *engaged* in queſt of knowledge *foreign* to our purpoſe.

2. That we apply ourſelves with a very *tender* and *ſenſible concern* to the *ſtudy* of *illuminating truths.*

3. That we act *conformable* to thoſe *meaſures* of *light* which we have *attained.*

4. That we frequently and conſtantly addreſs ourſelves to *God* by *prayer*, for the *illumination* of his *grace.*

1. That we do not ſuffer, *&c.* *This* is a natural and neceſſary *conſequence* of what has been already ſaid concerning *illumination.* For if *illumination* conſiſt in the *knowledge*, not of *all* ſorts of *truths*, but the moſt *neceſſary* and *important*, ſuch as *purify* and *perfect* our nature; ſuch as procure us *ſacred* and *ſtable pleaſure*, and all the *rewards* that flow from our *adoption* to *God*; it is then plain, he, who would be *perfect*, ought not to amuſe and diſtract his mind in purſuit of *trifling* or *divertive knowledge*; that he ought to ſhun, and not to admit, whatever is apt to *entangle*, *perplex*, or *defile* him; and to fix his thoughts, and *confine* his me-

ditations to the *great truths* of the *goſpel.* He that *knows the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent,* knows *enough* to oblige him to *virtue,* and to open the way to *glory* and *everlaſting life.* He that *knows nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified,* knows *enough* in order to *peace, grace,* and *joy; enough* to promote *holineſs* and *hope: hope* that abounds in *joy unſpeakable and full of glory.*

2. We muſt apply ourſelves with a very *tender* and ſenſible *concern* to the ſtudy of *illuminating truths.* This *rule* muſt be underſtood to enjoin *three* things. 1. Great *care* and *caution* in examining doctrines propoſed; and in diſtinguiſhing between *truth* and *falſhood.* 2. Great *diligence* and *induſtry* to increaſe and enlarge our *knowledge.* 3. Frequent and ſerious *reflections* upon the *truths* we *know.*

1. There is need of great *caution* in the *trial* and *examination* of *doctrines.* This the *ſcripture* itſelf frequently puts us in mind of: and not without reaſon; becauſe the devil *ſows his tares amongſt the wheat*; *errors,* and theſe too fatal and deſtructive ones, are frequently obtruded upon the world for the *revelations of God*; and every *party,* nay, every *ſingle author,* lays the ſtreſs of *ſalvation* on their *peculiar* and *diſtinguiſhing* opinions. *Beloved, believe not every*

every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of God: becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world, 1 John iv. 1. 'Tis needleſs to multiply *texts* or *words* on this occaſion. When the peace and purity of our mind, the rectitude and happineſs of our lives, and the bleſſedneſs of eternity has ſo cloſe and neceſſary a dependence upon the *doctrines* we imbibe, that we hereby either *ſecure* or *forfeit* them; who ſees not, unleſs he be ſtupid and infatuated, that greater *care* and *ſolicitude* is neceſſary *here*, than in *any* matter whatever, becauſe there is *no* other of *equal* moment? Bad *money*, or bad *wares*, inſtead of good; an ill *title* or *conveyance*, inſtead of a firm and clear one, may *impoveriſh* us: bad *drugs*, inſtead of good, may *infect* the *body*, and *deſtroy* the *health*: but what is all *this* to the diſmal conſequences of *error* and *hereſy*, which *impoveriſhes* and *infects* the *mind*, *perverts* the *life*, and *damns* the *man* to all *eternity?* The example of the *Bereans* is never *forgot*; and indeed never *ought* to be on *this* occaſion. We muſt admit nothing *haſtily*; aſſent to nothing without examining the *grounds* on which it ſtands. *Credulity*, *precipitation* and *confidence* are irreconcileable enemies to *knowledge* and *wiſdom*.

2. We are to uſe great *diligence* and *induſtry* to enlarge and increaſe our *knowledge*. The treaſures of *divine wiſdom* are almoſt infinite; and it fares with *thoſe* that *ſtudy* them, as with a *traveller* when he aſcends a *riſing* ground: every *new* ſtep almoſt *enlarges* his *horizon*, and preſents *new* countries, *new* pleaſures to his eye. 'Tis our own negligence, if we do not daily extend the *compaſs* of our *knowledge*; if our *view* of things grow not more diſtinct and clear, and our *belief* of them more firm and ſteddy. This is, to *grow in grace and in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. This is, to *have the eye of our underſtanding opened*, Eph. i. 17. This is, to *be filled with the knowledge of God, in all wiſdom and underſtanding*, Col. i. 9. This is, finally, *for the word of God to dwell in us richly*, Col. iii. 16. And of what *importance* this is, is manifeſt from what I have before proved; namely, that *illumination* conſiſts not in a credulous and ill-grounded, in a ſlight and ſuperficial, or a confuſed and obſcure, or imperfect ſort of *knowledge*; but in a clear, diſtinct, firm, and well-eſtabliſhed one. And the acquiring ſuch a one demands a very *diligent* and an *indefatigable ſtudy* of the *word of life*. To fill the mind with numerous, great, and beautiful *ideas*, and *theſe* clear and diſtinct;

to

to have them engraven in the memory in deep and laſting *characters*; to have them lodged and diſpoſed in that *order*, as to be able in an inſtant to have recourſe to them; to diſcern and demonſtrate plainly the *connexion* and *dependance* of one upon another, and the unqueſtionable *evidence of each*; this is a work of *time* and *labour*; the fruit of a regular and aſſiduous *ſearch* after *truth*; and if the capacities and fortunes of all men will not ſuffer them to come up to *this*, they muſt come as near as they can. But if ſuch a *ſearch* as this be *not* neceſſary to *penetrate* the depths, and to *diſcover* the beauties of *divine truths*, or to *convince* the world and our ſelves of the certainty of them; yet certainly *without* it we ſhall never be able to *extract* their *force* and *virtue*, and to *derive purity* and *nouriſhment* from them; which is the next thing implied in the rule laid down.

3. We muſt make frequent and ſerious *reflections* on the *truths* we *do know*. This again naturally follows from the *notion* of *illumination* as it is before ſettled. For if it is not *every knowledge* of the *beſt* things that ſuffices for *illumination*, but a *vital* and *operative* one, that is, a well-grounded, clear, diſtinct, and well-digeſted one; it is plain, that conſtant, daily, and devout meditation is neceſſary to *illumination*; becauſe 'tis not a tranſient and perfunctory

reflection upon the most *important* truths; 'tis not a fleeting, rambling, irregular, and desultory meditation of them that will possess us with *such* a kind of *knowledge*. To imprint a *truth* in *lively* notions upon our minds, to digest it into *nourishment* and *strength*, and make it *mix* itself with all our *affections*, and all our *actions*, it is necessary that we *dwell* upon it with constancy and delight. And accordingly we find, that excellent and elevated souls, both under the *Old Testament* and the *New*, have been daily, nay, almost hourly conversant in the *Book of God:* they have been passionately devoted to the *study* of it, and *delighted* more in *it*, than in *treasures* or *honours*, than in the most profitable *employments* or engaging *diversions* of life. 'Tis *this* kind of *meditation* on *God*, on *Jesus*, the *world*, and our *selves*, that can alone acquaint us thoroughly with *each:* 'tis *this* kind of *meditation* on *death* and *judgment*, *heaven* and *hell*, that can *make us wise unto salvation*.

The *sum* of all that I have said on this *rule* amounts to *this:* that *illumination* is not to be attained without *labour* and *travel*. It is indeed the *gift of God:* but such a one as he will *never* bestow, but upon those who *ask*, and *seek*, and *knock*. *Divine bounty* and *human industry* do here very well *accord:* the *Spirit of God* generally

join

joins them together; and 'tis *boldneſs* and *impiety* in *man* to go about to *divide them.* Prov. ii. 4, 5, 6. *If thou ſeekeſt her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her as hid treaſures; then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wiſdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding.* Nor will any one ſurely think it much to devote his *time* and *labour* to the *attainment* of *illumination.* For what is there that can more juſtly *challenge*, or better *deſerve both?* Can *pleaſure?* There is none but what flows from *wiſdom*, that is either *pure, great*, or *laſting.* Can *buſineſs?* What buſineſs can be of *greater* importance, than what ſecures our *ſalvation*, our *eternity? Wiſdom then is the principal thing, therefore get wiſdom: and with all thy getting, get underſtanding*, Prov. iv. 7. for without *this*, the moſt deſirable *poſſeſſions* and *pleaſures* of life are but *cheats* and *illuſions, miſchiefs* and *ſnares. For the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them*, Prov. i. 32.

3. That we act *conformable* to thoſe *meaſures* of *light* which we have *attained.* The more *ſpiritual* we grow, the *fitter* we are for the reſidence of *God's Spirit*, and the more *capable* of his *influences.* The more we ſubdue all *inordinate affections*, the *clearer* does the *underſtanding* grow, and

the more *abſolute* its *authority*. The *grace* of *God*, if it be complied with and obeyed, while it renders us more *like* God, renders us more *dear* to him too: and *one favour*, if it be not our own fault, qualifies us for *another*. Whoever ſhall obſerve the *ſcriptures*, will find that *holineſs* and *illumination* advance with *equal* ſteps, and grow up by the *ſame* degrees of maturity: that as we paſs on from the *infancy* to the *manhood* of *virtue*, ſo do we from the firſt *rudiments* of *wiſdom* to the *heights* and *myſteries* of it. But on the other hand, *luſt* obſcures and eclipſes the *light* within: *ſin* depraves and corrupts our *principles*: and while we renounce our *virtue*, we *quench* or *chaſe away the Spirit*. *Into a malicious ſoul wiſdom ſhall not enter; nor dwell in the body that is ſubject unto ſin: for the holy ſpirit of diſcipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without underſtanding; and will not abide when unrighteouſneſs cometh in*, Wiſd. i. 4, 5.

4. We muſt frequently and conſtantly addreſs our ſelves to *God* by *prayer*, for the *illumination* of his *grace*. There is *nothing* that we do not receive from *above*: and if the moſt *inconſiderable* things be the *gift of God*, from *what* fountain but from *him* can we expect *illumination*? The raptures of *poets*, the wiſdom of *law-givers*, the nobleſt pieces of *philoſophy*, and indeed

all *heroic* and *extraordinary* performances were by the *Pagans* themſelves generally attributed to a *divine inſpiration*. And the *Old Teſtament* aſcribes a tranſcendent ſkill even in *arts* and *trades* to the *Spirit of God*. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if *illumination* be attributed to *Him* in the *New*. *Wiſdom* and *underſtanding* are eſſential *parts* of *ſanctity*; and therefore muſt proceed from the *ſanctifying Spirit*. We muſt therefore conſtantly look up to *God*, and depend upon *Him* for *illumination*; we muſt earneſtly *pray* in the words of St. *Paul*, *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, would give unto us the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation*, Eph. i. 17. This dependence upon *God*, in expectation of his *bleſſing* on our *ſearch* after *knowledge*, puts the mind into the beſt *diſpoſition* and *frame* to attain it; becauſe it naturally frees and diſengages it from thoſe *paſſions*, *prejudices*, and *diſtractions*, which otherwiſe entangle and diſturb it, and render it incapable of raiſed, ſedate, and coherent thoughts. But what is *more* than this, there are repeated and expreſs *promiſes* made it; ſo that it can never fail of ſucceſs: *Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and you ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened to you.* The reaſon of which is added; *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more*

more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things (or as it is *Luke* xi. *the Holy Spirit*) *to them that aſk him?* Mat. vii. 7, 11. *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him,* Jam. i. 5. nor do I doubt but *every* good man has theſe *promiſes* verified to him. There are *ſudden* ſuggeſtions, *unexpected* manifeſtations, *extraordinary* elevations of mind, which are never to be accounted for, but by a *divine principle.* Nor does this doctrine of *ſpiritual illumination* or *irradiation* in the leaſt diminiſh the power and excellence of the *goſpel of Chriſt,* no more than the *inſtruction* of the *goſpel* does ſuperſede that of the *Spirit.* For we muſt not think that the *Spirit* does now reveal any *new* truth of *general* uſe or importance; ſince the *canon* of *ſcripture* would on this ſuppoſal be but a defective *rule of faith* and *manners.* But, *firſt,* The *Spirit* may *aſſiſt* us in making a fuller *diſcovery of the ſenſe* of *ſcripture. Secondly,* The *Spirit* may help us to form *clearer* and *diſtincter notions* of thoſe things we have yet but an *imperfect* and *general* knowledge of; and to fix and imprint them in more *laſting,* as well as more *legible* characters in our minds: or it may recall to our *remembrance* ſuch things as are obliterated and forgotten:

ten: or, finally, it may produce in us a more earneſt and ſteddy application to the truth of God. *Thirdly*, I ſee no reaſon why the *Spirit* may not vouchſafe us particular *impulſes*, *directions*, and *intimations* upon *extraordinary* occaſions and *ſudden* emergencies; where *holy writ* affords us no *light*, and *human prudence* is at a *loſs*. Nor does any thing, that I attribute to the *Spirit* in all this, detract or derogate from the dignity or the efficacy of the *ſcripture*. This then, I conceive, is *what* the *Spirit* does in the work of *Illumination*. But *how* it does it, is not *neceſſary*, nor, I doubt, *poſſible* to be determined. Nor ought our *ignorance* of this to be objected againſt the *truth* of *divine illumination*. We are ſure we *underſtand* and *remember*, and exerciſe a *freedom* or *liberty* of will, in our choices, reſolutions and actions: but the *manner* how we do this, is an enquiry that does hitherto, for aught I can ſee, wholly ſurpaſs and tranſcend our *philoſophy*.

I will here cloſe this *chapter* with a *prayer* of *Fulgentius*, *lib.* 1. *cap.* 4. After he has in the beginning of the *chapter* diſclaimed all *pretences* to the ſetting up himſelf a *maſter*, *doctor*, or *dictator* to his *brethren*, he breaks out into theſe devout and pious words——"I will not ceaſe "to *pray*, that our true *Maſter* and *Doctor* "*Chriſt*

" *Chriſt Jeſus*, either by the *oracles* of his
" *goſpel*, or by the *converſation* of my *bre-*
" *thren* or *joint-diſciples*; or elſe by the ſe-
" cret and delightful inſtruction of *divine*
" *inſpiration*, in which, without the ele-
" ments of letters, or the ſound of ſpeech,
" *truth* ſpeaks with ſo much the *ſweeter*, as
" the *ſtiller* and *ſofter* voice; would vouch-
" ſafe to *teach* me thoſe things, which I may
" *ſo* propoſe, and *ſo* aſſert, that in all my
" expoſitions and aſſertions, I may be ever
" found conformable, and obedient, and
" firm to *that truth*, which can neither
" *deceive* nor be *deceived*. For it is *truth*
" itſelf that enlightens, confirms, and aids
" me, that I may always obey and aſſent
" to the *truth*. By *truth* I deſire to be
" informed of thoſe many *more* things
" which I am *ignorant* of, from *whom* I
" have received the *few* I know. Of *truth*
" I beg, through preventing and aſſiſting
" grace, to be inſtructed in whatever I
" *yet* know not, which conduces to the
" intereſt of my virtue and happineſs;
" to be preſerved and kept ſtedfaſt in *thoſe*
" truths which I *know*; to be reformed
" and rectified in thoſe points, in which,
" as is common to man, I am *miſtaken*;
" to be confirmed and eſtabliſhed in thoſe
" truths wherein I *waver*; and to be de-
" livered from thoſe opinions that are *er-*
" *roneous* or *hurtful*. I beg, laſtly, that

" *truth* may ever find, both in my thoughts " and ſpeeches, all that ſound and whole- " ſome doctrine I have received from *its* " gift; and that *it* would always cauſe me " to utter thoſe things which are agreeable " to *itſelf* in the *firſt* place; and conſequent- " ly acceptable to *all* faithful *Chriſtians* in " the *next*."

CHAP. III.

Of liberty in general. The notion of it truly ſtated, and guarded. The fruits of this liberty. 1. *Sin being a great evil, deliverance from it is great happineſs.* 2. *A freedom and pleaſure in the acts of righteouſneſs and good works.* 3. *The near relation it creates between God and us.* 4. *The great fruit of all, eternal life; with a brief exhortation to endeavour after deliverance from ſin.*

AFTER *illumination*, which is the *Perfection* of the *underſtanding*, follows *liberty*, which is the *Perfection* of the *will*. In treating of which, I ſhall, *firſt*, give an account of *liberty* in *general:* and *then* diſcourſe of the ſeveral *parts* of it; as it regards *wickedneſs*, *unfruitfulneſs*, *human infirmities*, and *original corruption*.

§. 1. What

§. 1. What *liberty* is. There have been ſeveral *miſtakes* about this matter: but theſe have been ſo abſurd or extravagant, ſo deſigning or ſenſual, that they *need* not, I think, a ſerious *refutation*. However, 'tis neceſſary in a word or two to remove this *rubbiſh* and *lumber* out of my way, that I may build up and eſtabliſh the *truth* more eaſily and regularly. *Some* then have placed Chriſtian *liberty* in deliverance from the *Moſaic yoke*. But this is to make our *liberty* conſiſt in freedom from a *yoke* to which we were *never* ſubject; and to make our glorious Redemption, from the tyranny of *ſin* and the *miſery* that attends it, dwindle into an immunity from *external* rights and obſervances. 'Tis true, the *Moſaic* inſtitution, as far as it conſiſted in *outward* obſervances and *typical* rites, is now diſſolved; the *Meſſias* being come, who was the *ſubſtance* of thoſe *ſhadows*; and the *beauty of holineſs* being unfolded and diſplayed, without any *veil* upon her face. But what is this to *eccleſiaſtical authority?* or to thoſe *eccleſiaſtical inſtitutions*, which are no part of the *Moſaic* yoke? From the abrogation indeed, or abolition of *ritual* and *typical* religion, one may infer, *firſt*, That *Chriſtianity* muſt be a *rational worſhip*, a *moral ſpiritual* ſervice. And therefore, *ſecondly*, That *human* inſtitutions, when they enjoin

join any thing as a *neceſſary* and *eſſential* part of religion, which *God* has not made ſo, or when they impoſe ſuch *rites*, as, thro' the number or nature of them, cheriſh *ſuperſtition*, *obſcure* the *goſpel*, weaken its force, or prove *burthenſome* to us, are to be rejected and not complied with. Thus much is plain, and nothing farther. There have been *others*, who have run into more intolerable *errors*. For ſome have placed *Chriſtian liberty* in exemption from the laws of *man:* and *others*, advancing higher, in exemption even from the *moral* and *immutable* laws of *God*. But the *folly* and *wickedneſs* of theſe opinions ſufficiently *confute* them; ſince 'tis notorious to every one, that *diſobedience* and *anarchy* is as flat a contradiction to the *peaceableneſs*, as *voluptuouſneſs* and *luxury* is to the *purity* of that *wiſdom, which is from above*. But how abſurd and wicked ſoever theſe *notions* are, yet do we find them greedily embraced and induſtriouſly propagated at *this* day, and behold, with amazement, the baffled and deſpicable *Gnoſticks*, *Priſcilianiſts*, *Libertines*, and I know not what *other* ſpawn of *hell*, reviving in *deiſts* and *atheiſts*. *Theſe* indeed do not advance their errors under a pretence of *Chriſtian liberty*; but, which is more ingenuous, and leſs ſcandalous of the two, in open *defiance* and confeſſed *oppoſition* to *Chriſtianity*. They

tell

tell us that we impoſe upon the world *falſe* and *fantaſtick* notions of *virtue* and *liberty:* that *religion* does *enſlave* man, not ſet him *free*; awing the mind by groundleſs and ſuperſtitious principles, and reſtraining and infringing our true and natural *liberty:* which, if we will believe *them*, conſiſts in giving *nature* its full ſwing; letting looſe the reins to the moſt headſtrong *luſts*, and the wildeſt and the moſt corrupt *imaginations*. But to this 'tis eaſy to anſwer, that while theſe men attempt to eſtabliſh their errors, and fortify their minds in them, by *arguments* of ſome ſort or other, as they do; 'tis plain, that *they* ſuppoſe and acknowledge with *us*, that they ought to be ruled and governed by *reaſon:* and if *this* be true, then, by undeniable conſequence, true *liberty* muſt conſiſt not in doing what we *liſt*, but what we *ought*; not in following our *luſt* or *fancy*, but our *reaſon*; not in being *exempt* from *law*, but in *being a law to our ſelves*. And then I appeal to all the world, whether the diſcipline of *virtue*, or *libertiniſm*; whether the ſchools of *Epicurus*, or *Chriſt*, be the way to true *liberty*. I appeal to the *experience* of mankind, whether *ſpiritual* or *ſenſual* pleaſure; whether the *love of God* and *virtue*, or the *love* of the *world* and *body*, be the more like to qualify and diſpoſe us to obey the

the dictates of sober and solid *reason*. But the truth is, here is no need of *arguments*; the *lives* and *fortunes* of *atheists* and *deists* proclaim aloud what a glorious kind of *liberty* they are like to bless the world with, 2 *Pet.* ii. 19. *Whilst they promise liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.* And this *corruption* draws on their *ruin*. The dishonourable and miserable *courses*, in which these poor wretches are plunged, and in which, generally, they perish before their time, are such an open *contradiction* to *reason*, that no man doubts but that they have abandoned *its* conduct, that they have given themselves up to that of *lust* and *humour*; and that they earnestly endeavour to force or betray their *reason* into *compliance* to *screen* themselves from the reproach and disturbance of their own *minds*, and from the shame and contempt of the *world*. I have dwelt long enough on *this* argument. 'Tis now time to pass on, and resolve what *Christian liberty* really *is*.

This is in a manner evident from what has been suggested already. For if *reason* be the governing faculty in *man*, then the *liberty of man* must consist in his *subjection* to *reason*: and so *Christian liberty* will be nothing else but *subjection* to *reason* enlightened by *revelation*. *Two* things therefore are *essential* to true *liberty*: A

clear and unbyaſſed *judgment*; and a power and capacity of acting *conformable* to it. This is a very *ſhort*, but *full* account of *liberty*. *Darkneſs* and *impotence* conſtitute our *ſlavery*; *light* and *ſtrength* our *freedom*. Man is then *free*, when his *reaſon* is not awed by vile *fears*, or bribed by viler *hopes*; when it is not tumultuouſly tranſported and hurried away by *luſts* and *paſſions*; nor cheated and deluded by the gilded appearances of *ſophiſticated* good; but it deliberates *impartially*, and commands *effectually*. And becauſe the great *obſtacle* of this *liberty* is *ſin*; becauſe natural and contracted *corruption* are the *fetters* in which we are bound; becauſe the *law in the body wars againſt the law in the mind*, obſcuring the *light*, and enfeebling the *authority* of *reaſon*; hence it is, that *Chriſtian liberty* is as truly as commonly deſcribed by a *dominion* over the *body*, by the ſubduing our corrupt *affections*, and by *deliverance* from *ſin*. This notion of *liberty* may be ſufficiently eſtabliſhed upon that account of *ſervitude* or *bondage* which the *apoſtle* gives us, *Rom.* vii. where he repreſents it as conſiſting in *impotence* or *inability* to do thoſe things, which *God* commands, and *reaſon* approves: *For to will is preſent with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not*, ver. 18. *Liberty* therefore muſt on the *contrary* conſiſt in being

able,

able, not only to *will*, but to *do* good; in *obeying* thoſe *commandments*, which we cannot but acknowledge to be *holy*, and *juſt*, and *good*. And this is the very notion which our *Lord* and *Maſter* gives us of it, *John* viii. For, when the *Jews* bragged of their *freedom*, he lets them know, that *freedom* could not conſiſt with *ſubjection* to *ſin*: *He that committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin*, ver. 34. That honourable *parentage*, and the *freedom* of the *body*, was but a falſe and ludicrous *appearance* of *liberty*: that if they would be *free indeed*, *the Son muſt make them ſo*, ver. 36. *i. e.* they muſt, by his *ſpirit* and *doctrine*, be reſcued from the *ſervitude* of *luſt* and *error*, and be ſet at *liberty* to work *righteouſneſs*. *If ye continue in my word*, *then are ye my diſciples indeed*: *and ye ſhall know the truth*, *and the truth ſhall make you free*, ver. 31, 32. Finally, not to multiply *proofs* of a truth that is ſcarce liable to be *controverted*, as the *apoſtle* deſcribes the *bondage* of a *ſinner* in *Rom.* vi. ſo does he the *liberty* of a *ſaint* in *Rom.* viii. For there, *ver.* 2. he tells us, that the *law of the ſpirit of life* has ſet the true Chriſtian *free from the law of ſin* and *death*. And then he lets us know *wherein* this *liberty* conſiſts, *in walking*, *not after the fleſh*, *but after the ſpirit*; in the *mortification* of the *body of ſin*, and *reſtitution* of the *mind* to its juſt *empire*

and *authority*. *If Chriſt be in you, the body is dead becauſe of ſin; but the ſpirit is life becauſe of righteouſneſs*, ver. 10. And all this is the ſame thing with his *deſcription* of *liberty*, chap. vi. where 'tis nothing elſe, but for a man to be made *free from ſin, and become the ſervant of God*. Thus then we have a plain account of *bondage* and *liberty*. Yet for the clearer underſtanding of *both*, it will not be amiſs to obſerve, that they are *each* capable of different *degrees*; and both the *one* and the *other* may be *more* or *leſs* entire, compleat, and abſolute, according to the different *progreſs* of men in *vice* and *virtue*. Thus, in *ſome* men, not their *will* only, but their very reaſon is *enſlaved*. Their *underſtanding* is ſo far infatuated, their affections ſo *intirely* captivated, that there is no *conflict* at all between the *mind* and the *body*: they commit *ſin* without any *reluctancy* beforehand, or any *remorſe* afterwards: their *ſeared conſcience* making no *remonſtrance*, inflicting no *wounds*, nor denouncing any *threats*. This is the *laſt* degree of *vaſſalage*. *Such* are ſaid in *ſcripture* to be *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*. *Others* there are, in whom their luſt and appetite *prevails* indeed, but not without *oppoſition*. They *reaſon* rightly; and, which is the natural reſult of this, have ſome *deſires* and *wiſhes* of *righteouſneſs*: but through the

the prevalency of the *body*, they are unable to act and live *conformable* to their *reaſon*. Their *underſtanding* has indeed *light*, but not *authority*: it *conſents* to the *law* of *God*, but it has no power, no force to make it be *obeyed*: it produces indeed ſome good *inclinations*, *purpoſes* and *efforts*; but they prove *weak* and *ineffectual* ones, and *unable* to grapple with the ſtronger *paſſion* raiſed by the *body*. And as *bondage*, ſo *liberty* is of different *degrees*, and different *ſtrength*. For though *liberty* may be able to *ſubſiſt*, where there is much *oppoſition* from the *body*; yet 'tis plain that *liberty* is moſt *abſolute* and *compleat*, where the *oppoſition* is *leaſt*, where the *body* is reduced to an entire *ſubmiſſion* and *obſequiouſneſs*, and the *ſpirit* reigns with an uncontrouled and unlimited *authority*. And this *latter* is *that liberty* which I would have my *perfect* man poſſeſſed of. I know very well 'tis *commonly* taught by *ſome*, that there is *no* ſuch ſtate: But, I think, this *doctrine*, if it be throughly conſidered, has neither *ſcripture*, *reaſon*, nor *experience* to ſupport it. For as to thoſe places, *Rom.* vii. and *Gal.* v. urged in favour of an almoſt inceſſant, ſtrong, and too frequently prevalent *luſting of the fleſh againſt the ſpirit*; it has been often anſwered, and proved too, that they are ſo far from belonging to the *perfect*, that they belong not to

the *regenerate*. But, on the contrary, thoſe *texts* that repreſent the *yoke of Chriſt eaſy, and his burthen light*; which affirm the *commandments of Chriſt not to be grievous to ſuch as are made perfect in love*; do all bear witneſs to *that liberty* which I *contend* for. *Nor* does *reaſon* favour my opinion leſs than *ſcripture*. For if the *perfect* man be a *new creature*; if he be *tranſformed* into a *new nature*; if his *body* be *dead to ſin, and his ſpirit live to righteouſneſs*; in one word, if the *world be as much crucified to him, as he to it*; I cannot ſee why it ſhould not be *eaſy* for him to act *conſonant* to his *nature*; why he ſhould not with pleaſure and readineſs *follow* that *ſpirit*, and *obey* thoſe *affections*, which *reign* and *rule* in him. Nor can I ſee why a *habit of righteouſneſs* ſhould not have the ſame *properties* with *other habits*; that is, be attended with *eaſe* and *pleaſure* in its operations and actions. 'Tis true, I can eaſily ſee why the *habits of righteouſneſs* are *acquired* with more *difficulty* than thoſe of any *other* kind: but, I ſay, I cannot ſee, when they *are* acquired, why they ſhould not be as *natural* and *delightful* to us as any *other*. *Laſtly*, How *degenerate* ſoever ages *paſt* have been, or the *preſent* is, I dare not ſo far diſtruſt the goodneſs of my cauſe, or the virtue of *mankind*, as not to refer myſelf willingly, in this point,

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to the deciſion of *experience*. I am very well aſſured, that truth and juſtice, devotion and charity, honour and integrity, are to a great many ſo dear and delightful, ſo natural, ſo eaſy, that it is hard to determine, whether they are more ſtrongly moved by a ſenſe of *duty*, or the inſtigations of *love* and *inclination*; and that they cannot do a *baſe* thing without the utmoſt *mortification* and *violence* to their *nature*. Nor is all this to be wondered at, if we again reflect on what I juſt now intimated, that the *perfect* man is a *new creature, transformed daily from glory to glory:* that he is moved by *new affections*, raiſed and fortified by *new principles:* that he is animated by a *divine energy*, and *ſees* all things by a *truer* and *brighter light*; through *which* the *things of God* appear *lovely* and *beautiful*, the things of the *world deformed* and *worthleſs*; juſt as to him who views them through a *microſcope*, the *works of God* appear *exact* and *elegant*; but *thoſe of man, coarſe*, and *bungling*, and *ugly*. My *opinion* then, which aſſerts the *abſolute liberty* of the *perfect* man, is ſufficiently *proved here*, and in *chapter the firſt*. And *if* I thought it were *not*, I could eaſily *reinforce* it with freſh *recruits*. For the glorious *characters* that are given us in *ſcripture*, of the *liberty* of the *children of God*, and the bleſſed *fruit* of it, *peace*

and *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, would eaſily furniſh me with invincible *arguments:* nor would the *contrary* opinion ever have been *able* to have kept the *field* ſo *long* as it has done, had it not been favoured by a *weak* and *decayed piety*; by the *fondneſſes* of men for *themſelves*, in ſpight of their *ſins* and *frailties*; and by many *miſtaken texts*.

But that this matter may, if poſſible, be freed from *all objections*, 1. I here *diſtinguiſh* between *inordinate* and *natural affections*. By *inordinate affections*, I mean the tendencies of the ſoul towards that which is *unlaweful:* by *natural*, its propenſion to the *body* with which it is inveſted; the deſire of its *health* and *eaſe*, and the *conveniencies* and *neceſſaries of life* for this end. Now when *religion* enjoins repugnances to the *former* appetites, the *obedience* of the *perfect* man has *no reluctancy* in it: but when it enjoins things, as ſometimes occaſionally it does, which thwart and croſs the *latter*; here the *obedience* even of *Chriſt* himſelf could not be exempt from *conflict*; for our *natural appetites*, in *this* ſenſe of them, will *never* be put off till our *bodies* be. I think this is ſo *clear*, it needs not be illuſtrated by *inſtances:* or elſe 'twere eaſy to ſhew, that tho' good men have practiſed *temperance*, *chaſtity*, *charity*, and other virtues

tues of this kind with *eaſe* and *pleaſure* too; yet has nature *ſhrunk* and *ſtartled* at *perſecution* and *martyrdom:* tho' even *here* too the courage and reſolution of *ſome* hath appeared to be much *above* what *human nature* ever ſeemed *capable* of. 2. I do not in the leaſt ſuppoſe that *nature* is ſo *changed*, but that the *inclinations* to ſinful pleaſure, or profit, or any other forbidden object, will ſoon *revive* again, even in the *perfect* man, unleſs he keep a *watch* and *guard* upon himſelf, and *paſs the time of his ſojourning here in fear*. Not to be ſubject to *diſorderly deſires*, not to be liable to *irregular motions*, is the privilege of *ſouls* when ſtripped of a *mortal* body, or cloathed with an *immortal* one. Till *then*, the conjunction of *fleſh* and *blood* will ever render the poor *ſoul* obnoxious to *carnal* and *worldly* appetites: and the *natural* appetites of the body do ſo eaſily paſs thoſe bounds that divide them from *ſinful* ones, that the *beſt* of men can never be *ſecure*, but when the mind is taken up in *contemplation*, *devotion*, *good works*, or engaged in the *proſecution* of ſome juſt and honeſt *deſign*, or amuſed by ſome innocent *recreation:* for in theſe caſes the *body* is either made the *inſtrument of righteouſneſs*; or at leaſtwiſe, 'tis innocently *buſied* and *diverted* from thoſe *objects*, to which it has too impetuous a *tendency*. I have now, I think, ſufficiently

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ſtated the *notion* of *true liberty*; and, I hope, ſufficiently *guarded* it: and have nothing to do but to *proceed* to the *fruits* of it; which will ſerve for ſo many *motives* or *inducements* to its *attainment*.

§. 2. Of the *fruits* of *liberty*.

Theſe may be reduced under four *heads*.

1. *Sin* being a great *evil*, *deliverance* from it is great *happineſs*.
2. A ſecond fruit of this *liberty* is *good works*.
3. It gives us a near *relation* to *God*.
4. The great and laſt *fruit* of it is *eternal life*.

Theſe are *all* compriſed by the *apoſtle* in *Rom.* vi. 21, 22, 23. *What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life. For the wages of ſin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And theſe are the great *ends* which the *goſpel*, that *perfect law of liberty*, aims at, and for which it was *preached* to the world; as appears from thoſe words of our *Lord to St. Paul*, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. *Unto whom*

now I ſend thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me. I will *here* inſiſt on theſe bleſſed *effects* of *Chriſtian liberty*; not only becauſe the *deſign* of the *chapter* demands it, but alſo to prevent the being obliged to any tedious *repetition* of them hereafter, under every diſtinct *branch* of *Chriſtian liberty*.

§. 1. *Sin* is a great *evil*; and therefore *deliverance* from the *dominion* of it is a great *good*. To make this evident, we need but reflect a little on the *nature* and *effects of ſin*. If we inquire into the *nature* of *ſin*, we ſhall find that it is *founded* in the *ſubverſion* of the dignity, and *defacing* the beauty of *human nature*; and that it *conſiſts* in the *darkneſs* of our underſtanding, the *depravity* of our affections, and the *feebleneſs* and *impotence* of the will. The *underſtanding* of a *ſinner* is incapable of *diſcerning* the certainty and force of divine truths, the lovelineſs of virtue, the unſpeakable pleaſure which now flows from the great and precious *promiſes* of the goſpel, and the incomparably greater which will one day flow from the accompliſhment and fruition of them. His *affections*, which

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if fixed and bent on *virtue*, had been *incentives*, as they were deſigned by God, to *noble* and *worthy* actions, being *byaſſed* and *perverted*, do now hurry him on to *lewd* and *wicked* ones. And by *theſe* the *mind*, if at any time it chance to be awakened and rendered ſenſible of its happineſs and duty, is *overpowered* and *oppreſſed*. If *this* were not the true *ſtate* of a *ſinner*; if the *ſtrength* of *ſin* did not thus conſiſt in the *diſorder* and *impotence* of all the *faculties* of the *ſoul*, whence is it that the *ſinner* acts as he *does*? Is it not evident that his *underſtanding* is *infatuated*, when he lives as if he were merely, wholly, *body*? as if he had *no ſoul*, or none but one *reſulting from*, and *diſſolved with* its *temperament* and *contexture*? one deſigned to no higher purpoſe than to contrive, miniſter to, and partake in its *ſenſualities*? Is it not evident that *he* has little expectation of *another world*, who *lays up his treaſures* only in *this*; and lives as if he were born only *to make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof*? 'Tis true, all *ſinners* are not *equally* ſtupid or obdurate: but even in thoſe in whom ſome *ſparks* of *underſtanding* and *conſcience* remain *unextinguiſhed*, how are the *weak* deſires of *virtue* baffled and overpowered by the much *ſtronger* paſſions which they have for the *body* and the *world*?

world? Do they not find themſelves reduced to that wretched *ſtate of bondage*, wherein the *good that they would do, that they do not; but the evil that they would not do, that is preſent with them?* 'Tis plain then that *ſin* is a *diſeaſe* in our nature: that it not only *extinguiſhes* the *grace* of the *Spirit*, and *obliterates* the *image of God*, ſtamped on the ſoul in its creation; but alſo ſcatters and diffuſes I know not what *venom*, and *infection* through it, that makes it eagerly *purſue* its *own miſery*. 'Tis a *diſeaſe* that produces more *intolerable* effects in the *ſoul*, than *any* whatever can in the *body*. The predominancy of any noxious *humour* can breed no *pain*, *no diſturbance* equal to that of a predominant *paſſion*: no *ſcars* or *ruins* which the *worſt diſeaſe* leaves behind it, are half ſo *deformed* and *loathſome* as thoſe of *vice*: nay, that laſt *change*, which *death* itſelf produces, when it converts a *beautiful* body into *duſt* and *rottenneſs*, is not half ſo *contemptible* or *hateful* as that of *ſin*; when it transforms *man* into a *beaſt* or *devil*. If we do not yet ſufficiently comprehend the *nature* of *ſin*, by viewing it as it exiſts in our *minds* and *hearts*, we may contemplate it in our *actions*. And *here*, 'tis blindneſs and folly, raſhneſs and madneſs, incogitance, levity, falſhood, and cowardiſe; 'tis *every thing* that is *mean* and *baſe*:

base: and all this *aggravated* by the most accursed *ingratitude* that human nature is capable of. These and the like *reflections* on the *nature* of *sin* cannot chuse but render it *hateful.* And if,

Secondly, We make any serious ones on the *effects* of it, they cannot fail of rendering it *frightful* and *dreadful* to us. These *effects* may be especially reduced to *three:* 1. The ill influence *sin* has upon our *temporal* concerns. 2. *Guilt.* And 3. *Fear.* As to the *first* of these, I shall only say, that we suffer very few *evils* but what are owing to our own *sins:* that it is very rarely any *calamity* befals us, but we may put our finger on the *fountain,* the *sin,* I mean, from whence the mischief flows. *Whence come wars and fightings amongst you,* saith St. *James; come they not from your lusts, which war in your members?* This is every jot as applicable to *private* as *publick* contentions: and *where envy, strife, and contention is,* no *evil work,* no *disaster* will be long *absent.* I might run through all the different *kinds* of *evils* that infest the *body,* or embroil the *fortune:* that blast our *hopes,* or stain our *desires:* and easily shew, that they all generally spring from our *vices.* Nay, what is worse yet, I could shew that *sin* converts our *good things* into *evil,* and our *enjoyments* into *punishments:* that

that it renders the *ſlighteſt evils intolerable*; turns *ſcratches* into *wounds*, and *wounds* into *gangrenes*. But this is too *copious* a ſubject; and would inſenſibly render me *voluminous*, when I would be as *ſhort* as poſſibly I can. A *ſecond effect* of *ſin* is *guilt*; which is nothing elſe, but a *conſciouſneſs* of having *done ill*, and an *obligation* to *puniſhment* reſulting from it. And though men often *ſin* with *hopes* of *impunity*; yet it is hard to imagine, even on *this* ſuppoſal, that they ſhould *ſin* without ſuffering the *reproaches* of their *own minds*; which ſurely muſt be very *uneaſy* to them: to be perpetually *vexed* at one's *own folly*; to *commit* thoſe things which we inwardly *condemn*, and be in continual *pain* leſt they ſhould *come to light*; to be always *diſpleaſed* at *one's ſelf*, and *afraid*, not only of the *reflections* of *others*, but our *own*: *this* is, methinks, a *great* evil, did no *other* attend our *ſin*. But, *thirdly*, *fear* is almoſt inſeparably joined with *guilt*: for *guilt* does not only damp the *cheerfulneſs*, and enfeeble the *vigour* of the *mind*; it does not only deſtroy that *confidence* man would otherwiſe *naturally* have in *God*, and render him *cowardly* and *puſillanimous*; but it *terrifies* his ſoul with *melancholy* apprehenſions, and makes him live continually in *fear* of *death* and *puniſhment*.

And

And thus *ſcripture* repreſents the *ſtate* of a *ſinner: The wicked flee when none purſue; but the righteous are bold as a lion*, Prov. xxviii. 1. *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*, 1 Joh. iii. 2. *There is no peace to the wicked, ſaith the Lord*, Iſa. xlviii. 22. *To deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life time ſubject to bondage*, Heb. ii. 15. *The ſinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulneſs has ſurprized the hypocrites; who amongſt us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongſt us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Iſa. xxxiii. 14. Nor let any one wonder, that notwithſtanding the *outward gaiety* of the *ſinner*, the *Spirit* thus *deſcribes* the *inward condition* of his *ſoul*. As long as men retain the *belief* of a *God*, it is impoſſible they ſhould wholly free themſelves from the *fear* of him. They may indeed *forget* him in their *fits* of *luſt* or *paſſion:* but in their *intermiſſions* his *terrors* will *return* upon them with *more violence*. *Again*, as long as men retain the common principles of *truth* and *juſtice*; if they acknowledge but the obligation of that univerſal *law, Thou ſhalt do to others, as thou wouldeſt they ſhould do unto thee*, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould *reflect* on their *ſins* without *regret* and *uneaſineſs*; for there is no *ſin* but has, more or leſs,

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repugnancy in it to *truth*, *justice*, and *goodness*. *Finally*, As long as men are persuaded that there is such a faculty as *conscience*, that *God* has prescribed them a *law*, and that they are *accountable* to *him*; the *natural conscience* cannot chuse, but by *fits*, and upon *occasions*, to scourge and torture, lance and gash them. And 'tis a hard matter to *wear* out *these notions*: they are so *natural* and *obvious*; the *proofs* of them are so *clear*; their *reputation* and *authority* in the world is so well *established*; and the *providence* of *God* so frequently *inculcates* them. Men may easily wear out all sense of the *beauty*, and of their *obligations* to the *heights* and *perfections* of *virtue*: but they cannot so easily do this in reference to *virtue* in *general*; because 'tis tempered and accommodated to *human nature* and *society*; and necessary to the tolerable *well-doing* of the *world*. Men may soon, I confess, extinguish their *Christianity*, but not *humanity*: and while *this* remains, *sin* will leave a *stain* and *guilt* behind it; and *guilt* will be attended by *uneasiness* and *fear*. The very *pagans*, who had advanced *so far* in *wickedness*, as to be *given up* to all *dishonourable* passions, and to *commit all uncleanness with greediness*, had not yet so *mortified* and *stupified* their *conscience*, but that it gave much *disturbance*, Rom. i. *ver.* 32. 'tis said of them,

that *they knew the judgment of God, that they which committed such things, were worthy of death.* And Rom. ii. 15. *Their consciences* are said to *accuse and condemn them.* And 'tis of *very wicked* men, that the *author* to the *Hebrews* affirms, that *through fear of death they were all their life-time subject to bondage.*

But are there not, will some say, many *ingenious* and *brave* spirits, who have *dispersed* those vain *spectres,* and burst those superstitious *fetters,* by which you labour to *scare* and *enslave* the world? I do not doubt, indeed, but that there are *too many* who have vigorously endeavoured to cashier all *principles* of natural and revealed *religion,* and utterly to extinguish all *conscience* of *good* and *evil.* But *this* is such an *attempt,* in which, I confess, I could never have *believed,* that the *most daring sinner* could have proved *successful,* had not the *scriptures* told me, that there are some *who are past feeling,* Eph. iv. 19. *of a seared conscience,* 2 Tim. iv. 2. *who are not ashamed when they have committed iniquity, neither can they blush,* Jer. vi. 15. *who call good evil, and evil good; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter,* Isai. v. 20. *Such sinners* there *are* then: but *what* does this amount to? *what* can *their* sense or example *weigh?* I am sure these

poor wretches are as far diſtant from any *true happineſs*, as from *ſenſe*; and deſerve our *pity*, not *imitation*. As will eaſily appear from theſe following *conſiderations*.

1. 'Tis true, *conſcience* depends upon *opinion*: but what if this *opinion* depend upon *ſenſe* and *truth*? what if it be built upon the *demonſtration of the ſpirit and of power*? in what a deplorable *condition* are theſe *men of wit*? the *fear* of an *angry God*, *a judgment* to come, and *an hell*, is no *common* or *ordinary fear*. 'Tis not the *fear* of a *ſcratch* or *wound* in the *body*; of a *baffle* in the purſuit of *preferment*, or a *diſappointment* in that of *pleaſure*; 'tis not the *loſs* or the *forfeiture* of *eſtate*, in part, or whole: 'tis not a *blot* upon our *reputation*: 'tis not the *death* of a *child*, a *brother*, or, what is *more*, if *he* be ſuch, a *friend*: 'tis not any thing of *this* kind that is the *object* of *this fear*; but *miſery* pure and unallayed; complicated, accumulated *miſery*; *miſery* unalterable, incurable, and laſting as long as *eternity*. Methinks, before one ſhould *venture* on a *ſin*, which is *threatned* with ſuch a *ſtate* as this; and much more, before one ſhould reſolve to *continue* in it, it were reaſonable to be very *ſure*, that the *notion* of a *hell* were *falſe*, and the doctrine of *eternal puniſhment* a *mere bugbear*. Nay, I proteſt, in a

matter of this *importance*, I think one ſhould ſcarce truſt to a *demonſtration*, unleſs it had paſs'd the *teſt* of the moſt *ſolid* and *impartial* part of mankind, and ſtood the *ſhock* and *trial* of many *ages*. But, alas, after the utmoſt *efforts* of *wit* and *luſt*, what has ever *yet* been produced that has been able to undergo the *examination* even of an *honeſt man?* what *arguments* have yet been ſtarted againſt a *judgment to come*, that have been able to work upon *any* who were truly *ſerious* in the point? and if a *judgment to come*, why not an *hell? Revelation* is plain; and *reaſon* can find no inconſiſtency in the *doctrine*. *Human laws* puniſh a *ſingle offence* ſometimes with *death* or *baniſhment*; with *loſs of eſtate:* and by *this* and divers *other* ways, extend the puniſhment of the criminal to his *poſterity:* that is, make it as *eternal* as they *can*. And ſhall it be thought *unjuſt* in *God* to puniſh the *repeated* provocations of an *impenitent life*; the *neglect of that great ſalvation* wrought by the *blood*, and *publiſhed* by the *mouth* of *his dearly beloved ſon*; and all this *wilfully* in *defiance* of the *light* of the *goſpel*, and *ſolicitations* of the *ſpirit*; in defiance of *mercies* and *chaſtiſements*; ſhall it, I ſay, be thought *unjuſt* in *God* to puniſh this by a *miſerable eternity?* When *infinite goodneſs* has in vain *tried* all imaginable *means* to

reclaim

reclaim a *sinner*, what has *he* to complain of, if *God* leave him to the *effects* of his own *choice*? *Sin*, as it alienates our *affections* from *God here*, so must it certainly exclude *us* from *his presence* and his *favour hereafter*. And what can be the case of that *wretched creature*, who is banished *for ever* to those *black* and *dismal* regions, which no *ray*, no *influence* of divine *goodness* can ever reach? *where* shall those *unhappy creatures* dwell, which shall be chased by the *presence* and *glory of God* out of the *new heaven* and the *new earth*, (or which rather can never approach either) *but* in that *outward darkness*, which is parted from the world of the *blessed* by an *unpassable gulph*? Ah then! if this be *so*, *what* do wretched men *gain* by growing *impudent* in *wickedness*? Alas! the more *insensible* men are of the deformity and danger of *sin*, the more *desperate* their *state*, the more *incurable* their *disease*; and the nearer *they* to *death* and *destruction*: *My spirit shall not always strive with man*. *This is* indeed a *blessed advantage*, to stand upon the brink of *damnation!* 'tis a *glorious victory*, to have *defeated* all the means of *grace* and *happiness!* 'tis an *heroick atchievement* to be able to *extinguish* all true *sense* and *reason*, as well as *religion*, and become impregnable, impenetrable to all *arguments*, to all *motives*, which either the tendereſt *love*

or the profoundeſt *wiſdom* of *God* and *man* can attack us by!

2. I cannot but think that thoſe *very* men, who for the *moſt part* are *obdurate* and *inſenſible*, do ſuffer *ſome*, though *rare returns* of *anxiety* and *fear*. *Why* elſe are they ſuch avowed *enemies* to *ſolitude* and *retirement?* to all ſerious and calm *reflections*; that they are ready to take up with a moſt trifling and contemptible *buſineſs* or *diverſion?* nay, *tired* with a dull and taſteleſs *repetition* of a *folly*, they chuſe to *repeat* it to their *lives end*, rather than be *alone*, and *thoughtful?* what is this but to *confeſs* that there is ſomething *within*, which they are afraid to *awaken?* that there is ſuch a *brightneſs* in *divine truth*, that they dare not open their *eyes* upon it, leſt it ſhould fill their ſouls with the *terrors* of *God?* This *height* of *wickedneſs* then at beſt is a ſtate fit only for *fortunate ſinners*, who can rowl and tumble from *folly* to *folly*, from *one* impertinence or extravagance to *another*, *endleſly:* and yet what becomes of thoſe poor things, when a *diſaſter*, when a *diſeaſe*, nay, but a *wakeful* hour by night forces them to *retire* into *themſelves?*

3. A *ſinner* does not *ſoon* arrive at this ſtate of *inſenſibility*. It coſts him very *dear* to grow *impudent* in his luſt. Many a *pang*, many a *torment* has he ſuffered firſt; often has he felt the *wounds of conſcience*; often has

has he trembled and ſhrunk at the *menaces* of *God*. The *ſoul* can no more be reconciled to *ſin*, than the *body* to *exceſs*, but by *paſſing* through many *painful* and *ſickly* fits, many *uneaſy* pangs and qualms. And is it not worth the *while* to *endure* ſo *much* in order to be *damned?* is it not an infallible *mark* of more than vulgar *wiſdom*, to purchaſe *miſery* at ſo *dear* a rate? To *endure hardſhip as good ſoldiers of Chriſt Jeſus*, for a *crown*, a *never-fading crown*; *this* with them, is an undertaking that deſerves to be *expoſed* and *laſhed* with the utmoſt *ſeverity* of ſpight and confidence: but to *ſuffer*, as it were, *repeated martyrdoms* to gain an *hell*, this is what they think *becomes* men of *their parts* and *gallantry*. Bleſſed God! to what degree of *madneſs* and *ſtupidity* may men of the *fineſt* natural parts ſink, when *abandoned* by thee? or rather, when *they* themſelves *abandon thee*, and that *light* which thou haſt ſet up in the *world?* Our *Lord* and *Maſter* thought the *profits* and *pleaſures* of the *whole* world a *poor* compenſation for the *loſs* of the *ſoul*: *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world*, &c. Matt. xvi. But *theſe* men, rather than it ſhould not periſh for ever, will charge through *ſhame* and *pain*, *remorſe* and *ſickneſs*, and *all* the *obſtacles* that *God* has ſet before *us* and a deſperate height of *wickedneſs*.

4. Though a *sinner* may come to that pass, as to *suppress* his *conscience*, and *master* his *fears*; yet he must ever be *conscious* to himself of the *fruitlessness* and the *meanness* of a course of *sin*. He must needs be inwardly sensible, that he has *wearied* himself to commit iniquity to *no purpose*; that his *mind* has been *restless* and *tempestuous*, like a *troubled sea*, *casting up its own mire and dirt*: he must be conscious to himself, that *he* is *false* and *unjust*, *inconstant* and *ingrateful*, and in *bondage* to *such* lusts as are *mean* and *poor*, and injurious to his *repose*, and which he has often *wished* himself *free* from. And *this*, no doubt, must be a *blessed* condition, when a man's own *mind* does to his face assure him, that *he* is *that* very thing which *all the world condemns and scorns*, and which he cannot *endure* to be *charged* with, without *resenting* it as the highest *affront!* Certainly it were better that *all the world* should *call me fool* and *knave*, and *villain*, than that I should *call myself so*, and *know it* to be *true*. My *peace* and *happiness* depends upon my *own* opinion of *myself*, not *that* of *others*: 'tis the *inward* sentiments that I *have* of *myself*, that *raise* or *deject* me; any my *mind* can no more be pleased with any *sensation* but its *own*, than the *body* can

can be gratified by the reliſhes of *another's palate.*

5. The more *inſenſible* a *ſinner* grows, the more *intolerable* is the *diſorder* and *diſtraction* which *ſin* produces in his affairs. While men are under any little reſtraints of *conſcience*, while they are held in by *ſcruples*, and *fears*, and *fits* of *regret*; while, in a word, they *ſin* with any *modeſty*, ſo long *ſin* will tolerably comport with their *intereſt* and *reputation*; but as ſoon as they grow *inſenſible* and *impotent*, they paſs all *bounds*, and there is nothing ſo *dear* and *conſiderable* to them, which they will not *ſacrifice* to their *wickedneſs*. Now wife and children, friends, eſtate, laws, vows, compacts, oaths, are no *ſtronger ties* to them than *Sampſon's withes*, or *cords*. Such a one as *this* is very well *deſcribed* in the *prophet*; *Thou art a ſwift dromedary, traverſing her ways; a wild aſs uſed to the wilderneſs, that ſnuffeth up the wind at her pleaſure; in her occaſion who can turn her away?* Jer. ii. 23. And again, he is fitly repreſented by an *horſe ruſhing into the battle.* He has as much *contempt* for his *ſafety* and *happineſs*, as for *reaſon* and *religion*; he defies *ſhame*, *ruin*, and *death*, as much as he does God and *providence:* in one word, with an impudent and lewd *ſtupidity* he makes all the *haſte* he can to be *undone*; and ſince he *will* be

ſo,

ſo, it were *well* if he could be undone *alone*. I am ſure we have too *many* inſtances at *this day* of the miſerable and fatal *effects* of *atheiſm* and *deiſm*, to leave any room to doubt whether I have *ſtrained* the point here or no.

Upon the whole it does appear, that *ſin* is a *great evil*; and that the *evil* of it is not *leſſened*, but *increaſed* by *obduration*. And from hence the *propoſition* inferred does naturally *follow*, that *deliverance* from it is a *great good*; ſo *great*, that if we eſtimate it by the *evil* there is in *ſin*, *health* to the *ſick*, *liberty* to the *captive*, *day* to the benighted, weary and wandering *traveller*; a *calm*, a *port* to *paſſengers* in a *ſtorm*; *pardon* to men *adjudged* to *death*, are but weak and imperfect *images* or *reſemblances* of it. A *diſeaſe* will at worſt terminate with the *body*, and *life* and *pain* will have an end *together*: but the *pain* that *ſin* cauſes will endure to all *eternity*; for the *worm dies not*, and *the fire will not be quenched*. The *error* of the *traveller* will be corrected by the approaching *day*, and his *wearineſs* refreſhed at the next *ſtage* he comes to; but he that errs impenitently from the *path of life*, is *loſt* for *ever*: when the *day of grace* is once *ſet* upon him, no *light* ſhall e'er *recall* his wandering *feet* into the *path*

of

of righteouſneſs and peace; no *eaſe*, no *refreſhment* ſhall e'er relieve his *toil* and *miſery*. Whilſt the *feet* of the *captive* are loaded with *fetters*, his *ſoul* may enjoy its trueſt *liberty*; and in the midſt of *dangers* and *dungeons*, like *Paul* and *Silas*, he may ſing *ſongs of praiſe and triumph*: but the *captivity of ſin* defiles, oppreſſes, and enſlaves the *mind*, and delivers up the miſerable man to thoſe *intolerable* and *endleſs* evils, which inexorable *juſtice* and almighty *wrath* inflicts upon *ingratitude* and *obſtinacy*. A *ſtorm* can but wreck the *body*, a frail and worthleſs *bark*; the *ſoul* will eſcape ſafe to *ſhore*, the *bleſſed* ſhore, where the happy *inhabitants* enjoy an undiſturbed, an everlaſting *calm*; but *ſin* makes *ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience*, and he that *periſhes* in it does but paſs into a *more miſerable* ſtate; *for* on *the wicked God will rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, ſtorm and tempeſt*; *this ſhall be their portion for ever*, Pſal. xi. And, *laſtly*, a *pardon* ſends back a *condemned criminal* to *life*, that is, to ſins and ſufferings, to toils and troubles, which *death*, if death were the utmoſt he had to fear, would have *freed* him from: but *he*, that is once *delivered* from *ſin*, is *paſſed from death to life*; and from *this life* of *faith*, of *love*, of *hope*, ſhall ſoon paſs to another of *fruition* and *glory*.

§. 2. A

§. 2. A *second fruit* of *liberty* is *good works*. *Here* I will shew *two* things: *First*, and this but *briefly*, that the works of *righteousness* contribute mightily to our *happiness*; and that *immediately*. *Secondly*, That *deliverance* from *sin* removes the great *obstacles* and *impediments* of *righteousness*, and throws off that *weight* which would otherwise *encumber* and *tire* us in our *race*. 1. *Holiness* is no small *pleasure*, no small *advantage*, to him who is *exercised* therein. When *nature* is *renewed* and *restored*, the *works* of *righteousness* are properly and truly the *works of nature*: and to *do good* to *man*, and offer up our *praises* and *devotions* to *God*, is to gratify the *strongest* and most *delightful inclinations* we have. These indeed are at first *stifled* and *oppressed* by *original corruption*, *false principles*, and *vicious customs*: but when once *they* have broke through *these*, like *seeds* through the *earthly coats* they are enclosed and imprisoned in, and are impregnated, warmed, and cherished by an *heavenly influence*, they naturally shoot up into *good works*. *Virtue* has a celestial *original*, and a celestial *tendency*; *from* God it *comes*, and *towards* God it *moves*: and can it be *otherwise* than *amiable* and *pleasant*? *Virtue* is all *beauty*, all *harmony* and *order*; and therefore we may view and review, consider and reflect upon it

it with *delight*. It procures us the *favour* of *God* and *man*; it makes our *affairs* naturally run *smoothly* and *calmly* on; and fills our minds with *courage*, *chearfulness*, and *good hopes*. In one word, *diversion* and *amusement* gives us a *fanciful* pleasure; an *animal sensitive* life, a *short* and *mean* one: *sin*, a *deceitful*, *false*, and *fatal* one: only *virtue*, a *pure*, a *rational*, a *glorious*, and *lasting* one. And this is *enough* to be said *here*: the *loveliness* of *holiness* being a *subject* which ever and anon I have *occasion* to engage in.

2. I am *next* to shew, that *deliverance* from *sin* removes the *impediment* of *virtue*. This will easily be made out, by examining what influence *selfishness*, *sensuality*, and the *love of this world*, which are the *three* great principles or sources of *wickedness*, have upon the *several parts* of evangelical *righteousness*. 1. The *first part* is that, which contains *those duties* that more immediately relate to *ourselves*. *These* are especially *two*, *sobriety* and *temperance*. By *sobriety*, I mean a serious and impartial examination of things; or such a state of mind as qualifies us for it. By *temperance*, I mean the moderation of our affections and enjoyments, even in lawful and allowed instances. From these proceed *vigilance*, *industry*, *prudence*, *fortitude*; or *patience* and *steadiness* of mind in the prosecution of what is best. Without

these

theſe 'tis in vain to expect, either *devotion* towards *God*, or *juſtice* and *charity* towards *man*. Nay, nothing *good* or *great* can be accompliſhed without them: ſince without them we have no ground to hope for, either the aſſiſtance of divine *grace*, or the protection and concurrence of divine *providence*. *Only*, the *pure* and *chaſte* ſoul is a fit *temple* for the reſidence of the *Spirit*: and the *providence* of *God* watches over none, or at leaſt none have reaſon to expect it ſhould, but ſuch as are themſelves *vigilant* and *induſtrious*. But now, how repugnant to, how inconſiſtent with thoſe virtues, is that *infatuation* of *mind*, and that *debauchery* of *affections*, wherein *ſin* conſiſts? How incapable either of *ſobriety* or *temperance* do *ſelfiſhneſs*, *ſenſuality*, and the *love of this world* render us? What a *falſe eſtimate* of things do they cauſe us to form? How *inſatiable* do they render us in our *deſire* of *ſuch* things, as have but *falſe* and *empty* appearances of good? And how imperiouſly do they precipitate us into thoſe *ſins*, which are the *pollution* and *diſhonour* of our nature? On the contrary, let man be but once *enlightened* by *faith*; let him but once come to believe, that his *ſoul* is *himſelf*, that he is *a ſtranger and pilgrim upon earth*, that *heaven* is his *country*, and that to do *good works* is to *lay up his treaſure* in it; let him, I ſay, but once

once believe *this*, and then how *ſober*, how *temperate*, how *wiſe*, how *vigilant*, and *induſtrious* will he grow? And this he will ſoon be induced to *believe*, if he be not actually under the influence of vicious *principles* and vicious *cuſtoms*. When the *mind* is undeceived and diſabuſed, and the *affections* diſengaged, 'tis *natural* to man to think *calmly*, and to deſire and enjoy with a *moderation*, ſuited to *juſt* and *ſober* notions of worldly things: for *this* is to think and act as a *man*. A *ſecond part* of *holineſs* regards *God* as its immediate *object*, and conſiſts in the *fear* and *love* of *him*, in *dependence* and *ſelf-reſignation*, in *contemplation* and *devotion*. As to this, 'tis plain, that whoever is under the *dominion* of any *ſin*, muſt be an *enemy*, or at leaſt a *ſtranger* to it. The *infidel* knows no *God*; and the *wicked* will not, or dares not, approach one. Their *guilt*, or their averſion keeps them from it. *Selfiſhneſs*, *ſenſuality*, and the *love of the world*, are inconſiſtent with the *love of the Father*, and all the ſeveral *duties* we owe him: they *alienate* the minds of men from *him*, and ſet up *other* Gods in his room. Hence the *covetous* are pronounced guilty of *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. and the *luxurious* and *unclean* are ſaid to make *their belly their god*, and to *glory in their ſhame*, Phil. iii. 19. But as ſoon as a poor man diſcerns

discerns that he has set his heart upon *false* goods; as soon as he finds himself *cheated* and *deceived* in all his expectations by the *world*, and is convinced that *God* is his proper and his sovereign *good*; how natural is it to *turn* his desires and hopes from the *creature* upon the *Creator*? How natural is it to *contemplate* his *greatness* and *goodness*, to *thirst* impatiently for his *favour*, and *dread* his *displeasure*? And *such* a man will certainly make the *worship* of *God* a great part, at least, of the *business* and *employment* of *life*. With *this* he will *begin*, and with *this* he will *end* the day: nor will he rest *here*; his soul will be ever and anon *mounting* towards *heaven*, in *ejaculations*; and there will be scarce any action, any *event*, that will not *excite* him to *praise* and *adore God*, or engage him in some wise *reflections* on his *attributes*. But all *this*, will the *loose* and *atheistical* say, may be well *spared*; 'tis only a vain and idle *amusement*. *War* and *peace*, *business* and *trade*, have no *dependence* upon it; *kingdoms* and *common-wealths* may *stand* and *flourish*, and sensible *men* may be *rich* and *happy without* it. But to this I *answer*, *religion* towards *God*, is the *foundation* of all true *virtue* towards our *neighbour*. *Laws* would want the better part of their *authority*, if they were not enforced by an *awe of God*: the wisest *counsels* would have

have no *effect*, did not *virtue* and *religion* help to execute them: *kingdoms* and *commonwealths* would be *diſſolved*, and burſt to pieces, if they were not united and held in by *theſe bonds*: and *wickedneſs* would reduce the *world* to one great *ſolitude* and *ruin*, were it not *tempered* and *reſtrained*, not only by the *virtues* and *examples*, but by the *ſupplications* and *interceſſions* too, of *devout* men. Finally, This is an *objection* fit for none to make, but the *ſottiſh* and the *ignorant*; men of *deſperate confidence*, and *little knowledge*. For whoever is *able* to *conſider*, by what *motives mankind* has ever been wont to be moſt ſtrongly *affected*; by what *principles* the *world* has ever been *led* and *governed*; how great an intereſt even *ſuperſtition* has had, either in the *civilizing* and *reforming* barbarous nations, or the *martial* ſucceſſes of the firſt *founders* of *monarchies*, and the like; whoever, I ſay, is *able* to *reflect*, though but ſlightly, on theſe things, can never be ſo ſilly, as to demand what the *uſe* of *religion* is; or to imagine it *poſſible* to *root up* its *authority* in the world.

The *third part* of *holineſs* regards our *neighbour*; and conſiſts in the exerciſe of *truth*, *juſtice*, and *charity*. And *no-where* is the ill influence of *ſelfiſhneſs*, *ſenſuality*, and the *love of the world*, more notorious than *here*: for theſe rendering us *impatient*

and *inſatiable* in our *deſires*, *violent* in the *proſecution* of them, *extravagant* and *exceſſive* in our *enjoyments*, and the *things* of this *world* being *few* and *finite*, and unable to *ſatisfy* ſuch *inordinate* appetites; we ſtand in *one another's* light, in *one another's* way to *profit* and *pleaſures*, or, too often at leaſt, *ſeem* to do ſo: and this muſt unavoidably produce a thouſand *miſerable conſequences*. Accordingly, we daily ſee that theſe paſſions, *ſelfiſhneſs*, *ſenſuality*, and the *love of the world*, are the *parents* of *envy* and *emulation*, *avarice*, *ambition*, *ſtrife* and *contention*, *hypocriſy* and *corruption*, *lewdneſs*, *luxury*, and *prodigality*, but are utter *enemies* to *honour*, *truth* and *integrity*; to *generoſity* and *charity*. To obviate therefore the miſchievous *effects* of theſe vicious *principles*, *religion* aims at implanting in the world, *others* of a *benign* and *beneficent* nature; *oppoſing* againſt the *love of the world*, *hope*; againſt *ſelfiſhneſs*, *charity*; and againſt *ſenſuality*, *faith*: and to the end the *different tendency* of theſe *different principles* may be the more conſpicuous, I will briefly compare the *effects* they have in reference to our *neighbour*. *Selfiſhneſs* makes a man look upon the *world* as made for *him* alone; and upon *all* as his *enemies*, who do any way *interfere* with, or *obſtruct* his *deſigns*: it *ſeals* up all our *treaſures*: *confines* all our *care*

care and *thoughts* to our *private* intereſt, honour, or pleaſure; *employs* all our *parts*, *power*, and *wealth*, and all our *time* too, in purſuit of our *particular* advantage. *Senſuality* tempts a man to *abandon* the care and concern for his *country*, his *friends* and *relations*, and *neglect* the *duties* of his *ſtation*, that he may give himſelf to ſome ſottiſh and diſhonourable *vice:* it prevails with him to refuſe *alms* to the poor, *aſſiſtance* to any publick or neighbourly good work, and even a *decent*, nay, ſometimes a *neceſſary allowance* to his *family*, that he may waſte and laviſh out his fortune upon ſome vile and expenſive *luſt*. In a word, it makes him incapable of the fatigues of *civil buſineſs*; and much more of the hardſhips and hazards of *war:* ſo that inſtead of imitating the glorious example of *Uriah*, who would not ſuffer himſelf to be courted into the enjoyment even of *allowed* pleaſures, nor indulge himſelf in the tenderneſſes and careſſes of a *wife* and *children*, while *Joab* and the armies of *Iſrael* were in the *field*; *he*, on the contrary, *diſſolves* and *melts down* his life and fortune in *uncleanneſs* and *luxury*, the ſhame and burden of his country and his family, at a time when not only the *honour*, but the *ſafety* of his *country* lies at ſtake, and *prince* and *people* defend it by their *toil* and *blood*.

What should I mention the *love of the world?* Are not the *effects* of it as visible amongst us, as *deplorable?* Does not this, where-ever it reigns, fill all places with *bribery* and *corruption*, *falsehood*, *treachery*, and *cowardice? Worse cannot* be said on't, and *more needs* not: for what *societies* can *thrive*, or which way can *credit* and *reputation* be *supported?* What *treasures*, what *counsels*, what *armies*, what *conduct*, can save a people, where these *vices* prevail? Let us now, on the other side, suppose *selfishness*, *sensuality*, and the *love of the world*, cashiered; and *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* entertained in their room; what a blessed *change* will this effect in the world? How soon will *honour* and *integrity*, *truth* and *justice*, and a *publick spirit* revive? How serviceable and *eminent* will these render *every* man in his *charge? These* are the true *principles* of great and brave *actions: these*, these alone, can render our *duty* dearer to us than any *temporal* consideration: these will enable us to do *good works*, without an eye to the *return* they will make us: these will make it appear to us very reasonable, to *sacrifice* fortune, life, every thing, when the *honour* of *God* and *publick good* demand it of us. The *belief* and *hope* of *heaven* is a sufficient *encouragement* to *virtue*, when all others fail: the *love of God as our supreme good*,

good, will make us eaſily *ſurmount* the conſideration of *expence*, *difficulty* or *hazard*, in ſuch attempts as we are ſure will *pleaſe* him; and the *love of our neighbour as our ſelves* will make us *compaſſionate* to his *evils* and *wants*, *tender* to his *infirmities*, and *zealous* of *his good* as of *our own*. How *happy* then would *theſe* principles make the *world*? And how much is it the *intereſt* of *every* one to *encourage* and *propagate theſe*, and to *diſcountenance* and *ſuppreſs* the *contrary* ones? I have done with the *ſecond effect* of *Chriſtian Liberty*; and will paſs on to the *third*, as ſoon as I have made *two remarks* on this laſt *paragraph*. *Firſt*, 'Tis very evident from what has been ſaid in it, that ſolid *virtue* can be *grafted* on no *ſtock*, but that of *religion*: that *univerſal righteouſneſs* can be raiſed on none but *goſpel principles*; who is *he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt*? 1 John v. 5. I do not oppoſe this *propoſition* againſt *Jew* or *Gentile*. *God* vouchſafed *in ſundry times and in divers manners*, ſuch *revelations* of his *truth*, and ſuch *communications* of his *grace*, as he ſaw fit: and to *theſe* is their *righteouſneſs* therefore, *whatever* it was, to be *attributed*; not to the *law* of *nature* or *Moſes*. But I *oppoſe* it againſt the *bold* pretenſions of *libertines* and *atheiſts* at *this day*. *Honour*

and *justice* in their mouths is a vain *boast*; and the *natural power* they pretend to over their *own* actions, to *square* and *govern* them according to the rules of *right reason*, is only a *malicious* design to *supplant* the *honour* of divine *grace*; and is as *false* and *groundless* as *arrogant*. Alas! they talk of a *liberty* which they do not *understand*: for did they but once admit *purity* of heart into their *notion* of it, they would soon discern what *strangers* they are to it. How is it possible, but that *they* should be the servants of the *body*, who reject and disbelieve the *dignity* and *pre-eminence* of the *soul*? How is it possible, *they* should not be *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, who either believe *no God*, or *none* that *concerns* himself much about us? And how can they chuse but be *selfish* and *sensual*, and doat upon this *world*, who expect *no better*, who believe *no other*? Take away *Providence* and a *life to come*, and what can *oblige* a man to any *action*, that shall *cross* his temporal *interest* or his *pleasure*? What shall *reward* his *espousing virtue*, when it has no *dowry*, but *losses*, *reproaches* and *persecutions*? What shall *curb* him in the career of a *lust*, when he may *commit* it, not only with *impunity*, but, as the world sometimes goes, with *honour* and *preferment* too? Though, therefore, such men

as theſe may poſſibly reſtrain their *outward actions*, yet are they all the while *enſlaved* and *defiled* in their *affections*; and the very *liberty* they boaſt of in their *conduct* and *management* of *themſelves openly*, ſprings from their *ſecret ſervitude* to ſome vile *paſſion* or other. Nor yet can I be ſo ſoft and eaſy as to grant, that *ſuch men* as theſe either do or can *arrive* at the *liberty* they pretend to: I mean, that of *regulating* and *governing* all their *outward actions* by the rules of *virtue*. They too often throw off the *diſguiſe*, which either *hypocriſy* or *enmity to religion* makes them put on; and *prove* too plainly to the world, that when they lay *reſtraints* on themſelves in *this* or *that ſin*, 'tis only to *indulge* themſelves the more *freely* and *ſecurely* in *others*. *Secondly*, My *next* remark is, that it is groſs ſtupidity, or impudence, to *deny* a *providence* and *another world*, when the *belief* of *both* is ſo indiſpenſably *neceſſary* to the well-being of *this*. The frame and nature of *man*, and the neceſſities of *this world* require *both*. Without theſe, *ſelfiſhneſs* muſt undoubtedly be the *predominant* principle. This would breed unreaſonable *deſires*; and theſe would fill us with *fears* and *jealouſies*: ſo that a *ſtate of nature* would indeed be a *ſtate of war*; and our *enmity* againſt one another would *not* be *extinguiſhed* by civil *ſociety*; but only *concealed* and *reſtrained*, till a fit

occasion for its breaking out should present itself: *laws* would want that *force*, *commonwealths* that *bond* or *cement*, *conversation* that *confidence*, and our *possessions* that *security* which is necessary to render them *blessings* to us.

§. 3. A *third fruit of Christian Liberty* is that *relation* which it creates between *God* and *us*. We are no longer *of the world*, but are *separated* and *sanctified*, *devoted* and *dedicated to God*. Thus St. *Peter*, 1 Epist. ii. 9. *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.* And thus St. *Paul*, Rom. viii. 15, 16. *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.* *God* is *our God*; *we* are *his people*. *He* is *our Father*, and *we* are *his children*, we are *ingrafted* into his *family*. The *consequence* of this is, his *dearly beloved* and *only begotten Son* is our *Advocate at his right hand*, the *Propitiation for our sin*, and *Intercessor* for us. His *Spirit* resides with us to *comfort* and *assist* us; his *angels* guard us, and minister to us; for we are no longer the *object* of his *wrath*, but of his *love* and *care*. How does

the *apoſtle* triumph on *this* argument, *Heb.* xii. 18, 19, &c. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; nor into blackneſs and darkneſs, and tempeſt: and the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they who heard, intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded; and if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned, or thruſt through with a dart: and ſo terrible was the ſight, that* Moſes *ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem: and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, which are written in heaven; and to God, the judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect: and to Jeſus, the Mediator of the new covenant: and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel.* And thus again, 1 *Cor.* iii. 2. *Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.* Theſe are *great* and *glorious* things. What *dignity* and *eminence* does this *adoption* raiſe us to? What *bleſſedneſs* flows from *communion*

nion and *fellowship* with *God?* What can we *want*, or what can we *fear*, when we have so mighty an *interest* in the *Sovereign of heaven and earth*; when all his divine *Perfections* are employed to promote and secure our *happiness? Now* sure we may rejoice, *now* we may *glory* and *triumph*; for certainly *all things* must *work together for our good.* But as *fallen angels* envied the *happiness* of *new-created man*; so do *apostate* and *debauched men* envy that of the *godly.* And one of these will be apt to *say*, Hold, *Sir*, you run too *fast*; these glorious *privileges* are yet but in *embryo*, and all your *happiness* is *yet* but in the *reversion:* notwithstanding all these big words you must grant me that you are *yet* but in a *state of probation*; that you are to undergo *hardships* and *difficulties*, and to live upon the thin diet of *hope* and *expectation:* and so I think I might take you down from *heirs* of God, to *servants* at the best. Well, I will grant, that we *yet live by faith*, and *wait for the hope of glory:* nor will I at *present* contend about *those* pleasures that are but in the *bud:* I will for once quit all that *preference* both as to *nobility* and *pleasure*, which *adoption* and the full *assurance* of *hope*, gives a *godly* man above a *sinner*; and I will take the *state of a child of God*, to be as the *objector* would have it; I will

suppose

suppose him to be *under age* till he come to *another* life; and to *differ nothing from a servant whilst* he is *so, though he be heir of all.* Yet after all, if I can prove that 'tis our *duty* to *serve God,* it will be no *contemptible fruit,* no *small commendation* of *liberty,* that it *enables* us *to do* our *duty.* And that it is our *duty* to *serve God,* is plain: for is it not fit that *he,* who *made* and still *upholds the world,* should *govern* it? Ought we not to pay *obedience* to *his* laws, whose infinite *Perfections* and immense *beneficence* invest him with an absolute and uncontroulable *sovereignty* over us? *Whom* should we *honour* with our *soul* and *body,* but *him* who is the *author* of *both?* to *whom* should we *devote* and *sacrifice* what we *have,* but to *him* from *whom* we *received* all? *whose praise* should we *shew forth,* but *his* who has *called us out of darkness into his marvellous light? whom* should we *obey* and *adore,* but *him* who has *translated us out of bondage* into *liberty,* out of the *servitude of Satan* into the *kingdom of his dear Son*; having *redeemed us,* by the *blood* of *his Son,* from that *wrath* to which our *sins* had deservedly *subjected* us? But this is not all; I shall prove it not only to be our *duty,* but our *honour* and our *happiness,* to *serve God*; even on the *supposition* on which the *objection* proceeds, and which I at *present grant.*

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis our *honour* to *serve him*, whom *angels* serve, *to whom all things in heaven and in earth do bow and obey*. 'Tis the highest *prerogative* we can derive from *grace* or *nature*, to be *capable of serving him*. His divine *Perfections* transcend the *conceptions* of *inferior creatures*, and can be *known*, *contemplated*, and *adored* by none, but such as are *made but a little lower than the angels*; such as are *endued*, not only with the *light* of *reason*, but with a far *brighter*, that of the *Spirit of God*. *This* is indeed *our* utmost *Perfection*, and must be our utmost *ambition*: *this* alone makes us *considerable*, who are in all *other* respects but *mean* and *contemptible*; for we draw but a *precarious* and *dependent* breath, and the *world* we inhabit is a *dark* and *tempestuous* one, full of *folly* and *misery*. But even *this* will serve for a further *confirmation* of what I *further* contend for. For being *indigent* and *needy*, standing at an *infinite* distance from *self-sufficiency*, 'tis plain that what we cannot find *within* us, we must seek without us. Some *all-sufficient* good we must *find* out; *something* we must *rest* in, and *repose* our selves upon; and *this will* be our *God*, *this* we shall *serve* and *adore*.. And *what* shall this *be?* shall we serve *evil spirits? these* are our avowed and inveterate *enemies*, and *go about like a roaring lion seeking whom they*

they may devour. Shall we serve the *good?* this were to *dishonour* our *nature,* to serve our *fellow-creatures* and *fellow-servants:* besides, that *such* will never *sacrilegiously* usurp their *Maker's honour,* nor *admit* that *service* which is *due* to *him* alone. Shall we then serve *man?* alas! the *breath* of *great ones* is *in their nostrils;* their *life is but a vapour,* tossed to and fro with restless noise and motions; and then it *vanishes;* they *die, and all their thoughts and projects perish.* What then; shall we at length be reduced to serve our *lusts?* this is worse than *pagan idolatry; stocks and stones* indeed could not *help* or *reward* their *votaries;* but our *lusts,* like wild and *savage tyrants, destroy* where they *rule,* and oppress and overwhelm us with *ruins* and *mischiefs,* while we *servilely* court and flatter them. I have not done *yet:* I have proved it indeed to be our *duty* and *honour* to *serve God;* but these with *some* are *cold* and *lifeless topicks:* I will now prove it to be our *interest* and *happiness;* and this too, laying aside at *present,* as I promised, the consideration of a *future reward,* and the *joys* springing *from* it. To make good this *assertion,* it will be necessary briefly to examine *two* things: *First,* The *design* or *end:* and *secondly,* The *nature* of *this service.* If we enquire after the *end* of it, 'tis evidently

our

our *own* advantage and happineſs. The *luſts* or the *humours*, the *wants* and *neceſſities* of man, may put *him* upon *invading* our *liberty*, or *purchaſing* and *contracting* with us for our *ſervitude:* but *God* is *all-ſufficient* to *himſelf*, and has no *need* of our *ſervice:* when he will be *glorified* by us, 'tis that *we* may enjoy his *protection* and *bounty:* when he obliges us to obey his commands, 'tis in order to *perfect* our *natures*, and *purify* and *qualify* us for the enjoyment of *ſpiritual* and *divine pleaſure:* when he enjoins us *prayer*, 'tis becauſe it does *exalt* and *enlarge* our minds, and *fit* us for the *bleſſings* it obtains: when he preſcribes us *ſelf-reſignation*, 'tis becauſe *he* will *chuſe for* us, and *manage* our affairs *better* than *we* can our *ſelves*. Let us in the *next* place conſider the *nature* of this ſervice. To *ſerve God*, what is it but to *love* what is *infinitely lovely*; to *follow* the conduct of *infinite wiſdom*, and to repoſe our *confidence* in *that* being whoſe *goodneſs* is as *boundleſs* as his *power?* to *ſerve God*, 'tis to purſue the great end of our *creation*, to act conſonant to the *dignity* of our *nature*, and to *govern* our *lives* by the dictates of an *enlightened reaſon*. How wiſely has *our church* in one of her *collects* expreſſed her *notion* of the *nature* of *God's ſervice? whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom.* The *devil* maintains

maintains *his* dominion over us, by *infatuating* our *understandings*, by *enfeebling* and *fettering* our *wills*, by *deluding* and *corrupting* our *affections*: but on the quite *contrary*, the more *clear* and *impartial* our *understandings*, the more *free* and *absolute* our *wills*, the more *unbiass'd* and *rational* our *affections*, the *fitter* are we to *worship God*; nay indeed, we *cannot* worship him at all as we *ought* to do, *unless* our souls be *thus* qualified. Therefore is the *service of God* called a *rational service*, λογικὴ λατρεία: and the *word of God* is called ἄδολον γάλα, *sincere milk*; to signify to us, that in the *service of God* all is *real* and *solid* good. Such is the *Perfection of our natures*; the *might* and *joy* of *the Spirit*; the *protection* and *conduct* of *Providence*; and all the great and precious *promises* of *God in Christ* are *Yea* and *Amen*. But in the *service* of *sin* all is *cheat* and *imposture*; and under a pompous *shew* of *good*, the *present* is *vanity*, and the *future*, *repentance*; but such a *repentance* as does not *relieve*, but *increase* the sinners *misery*.

This is *enough* to be said of the *nature* of *God's service*: and by the *concessions* I made my *objector* about the *beginning* of this *head*, I am *restrained* from taking notice of the *more glorious effects* of it: yet *some* there are, very *great* and *good* ones, that fall *not* within the compass of the *objection*,

objection, which I will but just *mention*. The *first* is *rest*. While *religion* regulates the *disorder*, and reduces the *extravagance* of our *affections*, it does in effect *lay* a *storm*, and *compose* a *mutiny* in our *bosoms*. Whilst it *enlightens* our minds, and teaches us the true *value*, that is, at least the comparative *worthlessness* of *worldly* things, it *extinguishes* the *troubles* which *present* disappointments and losses, and *prevents* those *fears* which the prospect of *future* changes and revolutions is wont to create in us. A *mind* that is truly *enlightened*, and has no *ambition* but for *immortality* and *glory*, whose *humility* with reference to these *temporal* things is built upon a *true* notion of the *nature* of them; *this* soul has entered *already* into its *rest*. *This* is the *doctrine* of our *Lord* and *Master*, Matt. xi. 28, 29. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden*; this is, all ye that are oppressed by the *weight* of your own *cares* and *fears*, that are *fatigued* and *toiled* in the designs and projects of *avarice and ambition, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* I need not, I think, here shew, that the *more* we *fear* and *serve God*, the *more* we *love* and *admire him*, the *more clear* is the *understanding*, and the more *pure* the *heart*: for the *more* we converse with *solid* and *eternal* good,

good, the more *insignificant* and *trifling* will *temporal* things appear to us; and, the *more* the mind *rejoices in the Lord, the oftner* 'tis rapt up into *heaven*, and, as it were, *transfigured* into a *more glorious* being, by the *joy of the spirit*, and the *ardor* of *divine love*; the more *flat* and *insipid* are all *earthly* and *carnal* satisfactions to it. *Another effect* that attends our *shaking off* the *dominion* of *sin*, and our *devoting* our selves to the *service of God*, is our being *purified* from *guilt*. The *stains* of the *past* life are washed off by *repentance* and the *blood* of *Jesus*; and the *servant of God* contracts no *new* ones by *wilful* and *presumptuous* sin. *Now* therefore he can *enter* into *himself*, and *commune* with his own *heart*, without any *uneasiness*; he can *reflect* upon his *actions*, and *review* each *day*, when it is *past*, without inward *regret* or *shame*. To *break off* a *vitious* course; to *vanquish* both *terrors* and *allurements*, when they persuade to that which is *mean* and *base*; to be *master* of one's *self*, and *entertain* no *affections*, but what are *wise*, and *regular*, and *such* as one has reason to *wish* should daily *increase* and grow *stronger*; *these* are things so far from meriting *reproach* and *reproof* from one's *own mind*, that they are sufficient to *support* it against *all reproaches* from *without*. Such is the *beauty*, such the *pleasure* of a well-established *habit*

of *righteousness*, that it does *more* than *compensate* the *difficulties* to which either the *attainment* or the *practice* of it can expose a man. *Lastly*, He that is *free* from *guilt*, is *free* from *fear* too. And indeed *this* is the only way to get *rid* of *all* our *fears*, not by *denying* or *renouncing God*, with *atheists*; but by *doing the things that please him*. He that is truly *religious*, is the *only* man, who upon *rational* ground is raised above *melancholy* and *fear*: for *what* should he *fear? God is* his *glory*, his *boast*, his *joy*, his *strength*; and if God *be for him, who can be against him? neither things present, nor to come; neither life, nor death, can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus*. There is *nothing* within the bounds of *time or eternity* that he needs *fear*. *Man* cannot *hurt* him; he is *encompassed with the favour and loving-kindness of God, as with a shield*. But if *God* permit him to suffer for *righteousness* sake, *happy* is he; this does but *increase* his *present joy*, and *future glory*. But what is most *considerable*, *death* itself cannot *hurt* him, *devils* cannot *hurt* him; *the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*. For *there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. These *considerations*

ſiderations prove *the preſent* condition of a *ſervant of God happy: happy* in *compariſon* of the *looſe* and *wicked*; but in *compariſon* with what he *ſhall* be *hereafter*, he is infinitely *ſhort* of the *joy* and *glory* of his *end*. In *this* reſpect indeed he is yet in a *ſtate of trial* and *trouble*, of *diſcipline* and *probation*; in this reſpect his *perfection* and *happineſs* do but juſt *peep* up above the *ground*; the *fulneſs* and *maturity* of *both* he *cannot* enjoy till he come to *heaven*. And *this* is,

§. 4. The *laſt fruit* of *Chriſtian liberty*. That *heaven* will conſiſt of *all* the *bleſſings*, of *all* the *enjoyments* that *human nature*, when raiſed to an *equality* with *angels*, is *capable* of; that *beauties* and *glories*, *joys* and *pleaſures*, will, as it were, like a *fruitful* and *ripe* harveſt *here*, grow up *there* in *all* the *utmoſt plenty* and *perfection* that *Omnipotence* itſelf will ever produce, is not at all to be *controverted*. *Heaven* is the *maſterpiece* of *God*, the *accompliſhment* and *conſummation* of *all* his wonderful *deſigns*, the *laſt* and *moſt endearing* expreſſion of *boundleſs love*. And hence it is, that the *Holy Spirit*, in *ſcripture*, deſcribes it by the *moſt taking* and the *moſt admired* things upon *earth*; and yet we cannot but think that this *image*, though drawn by a *divine pencil*, muſt fall infinitely *ſhort* of it: for what *temporal* things can yield *colours* or *metaphors ſtrong*

and *rich* enough to *paint heaven* to the *life*? *One* thing there is indeed, which seems to point us to a *just* and *adequate notion* of an *heaven*; it seems to excite us to *strive* and *attempt* for *conceptions* of what we cannot *grasp*, we cannot *comprehend*; and the *labouring mind*, the *more it discovers*, *concludes* still the *more behind*; and *that* is, the *beatific vision*. *This* is that, which, as *divines* generally *teach*, does *constitute heaven*; and *scripture seems* to *teach* so *too*. I confess, I have often *doubted* whether our *seeing God* in the *life to come*, did necessarily *imply* that *God* should be the *immediate object* of our *fruition*: or only, that we should *there*, as it were, *drink* at the *fountain-head*; and being *near* and *dear* to *him* in the *highest degree*, should ever *flourish* in his *favour*, and *enjoy* all good, *heap'd up*, *press'd down*, *and running over*. I thought the *scriptures* might be easily *reconciled* to *this* sense; and the *incomprehensible glory* of the *divine Majesty* inclined me to believe it the most *reasonable*, and most easily *accountable*. *Enjoyment*, and especially where an *intelligent* Being is the *object* of it, seemed to *imply* something of *proportion*, something of *equality*, something of *familiarity*. But ah! *what proportion*, thought I, *can* there ever be between *finite* and *Infinite*? what *equality* between a *poor creature* and his *incomprehensible Creator*? What

What eye ſhall gaze on the *ſplendors* of his *eſſential* [illegible], when the very *light he dwells in* is *inacceſſible*, and even the *brightneſs* he *veils* himſelf *in*, is too *dazzling* even for *cherubs* and *ſeraphs*, for aught I know, to behold? Ah! *what familiarity* can *there* be between this *eternal* and *inconceivable Majeſty*, and *beings* which he has formed out of *nothing*? and when on this occaſion I reflected on the *effects* which the *preſence* of *angels* had upon the *prophets*, and ſaw *human nature* in *man ſinking* and *dying* away, becauſe unable to ſuſtain the *glory* of one of their *fellow-creatures*, I thought my ſelf in a manner obliged to *yield*, and ſtand *out* no *longer* againſt a *notion*, which, though *differing* from what was generally *received*, ſeemed to have *more reaſon* on its ſide, and to be *more intelligible*. But when I called to mind, that *God* does not diſdain, even while we are in a *ſtate of probation* and *humility*, of *infirmity* and *mortality*, to account us not only his *ſervants* and his *people*, but his *friends* and his *children*; I began to *queſtion* the *former* opinion: and when I had ſurvey'd the *nature* of *fruition*, and the various *ways* of it a little more *attentively*, I wholly *quitted* it. For I obſerved, that the *enjoyment* is *moſt tranſporting*, where *admiration* mingles with our *paſſion*: where the beloved *Object* ſtands not upon the ſame *level* with us, but *condeſcends* to

meet a *virtuous* and *aſpiring*, and *ambitious affection*. *Thus* the happy *favourite* enjoys a *gracious maſter*: and *thus* the *child* does with *reſpectful love* meet the *tenderneſs* of his *parent*: and the *wiſdom* and *virtue*, which ſometimes raiſes ſome *one* happy *mortal above* the *common* ſize and height of *mankind*, does not ſurely *diminiſh* but *increaſe* the *affection* and the *pleaſure* of his *friends* that enjoy him. *Again*, the *nature* of *enjoyment* varies, according to the various *faculties* of the *ſoul*, and the *ſenſe* of the *body*. *One* way we enjoy *truth*, and *another goodneſs*: *one* way *beauty*, and *another harmony*: and ſo on. Theſe things conſidered, I ſaw there was no neceſſity, in order to make *God* the *object* of our *fruition*, either to *bring him down* to any thing *unworthy* of his *glory*, or to *exalt* ourſelves to a *height* we are utterly *uncapable* of. I eaſily ſaw, that we, who *love* and *adore God here*, ſhould, when we enter into his *preſence*, *admire* and *love* him *infinitely more*. For *God* being *infinitely amiable*, the *more* we *contemplate*, the *more clearly* we *diſcern* his *divine perfections* and *beauties*, *the* more muſt our *ſouls* be *inflamed* with a *paſſion* for *him*: And I have no reaſon to doubt, but that *God* will make us the moſt gracious *returns of our love*, and expreſs *his* affections for *us*, in ſuch *condeſcenſions*, in ſuch *communications* of *himſelf*, as will tranſport us to the *utmoſt* degree that

that *created* beings are *capable* of. Will not *God*, that *ſheds abroad his love in our hearts* by his *Spirit here*, fully *ſatisfy it hereafter?* Will not *God*, who *fills* us here with the *joy* of his *Spirit*, by I know not what *inconceivable* ways, *communicate* himſelf in a more *raviſhing* and *ecſtatick* manner to us, when we ſhall *behold him as he is*, and live for ever *incircled* in the *arms* of his *love* and *glory?* Upon the whole then, I cannot but believe, that the *beatifick viſion* will be the *ſupreme* pleaſure of *heaven:* yet I do not think that this is to *exclude* thoſe of an *inferior* nature. *God* will be there, not only *all*, but *in* all. *We ſhall ſee him as he is*; and we ſhall *ſee* him *reflected*, in *angels*, and all the *inhabitants* of *heaven*; nay, in *all* the various *treaſures* of that *happy place:* but in far more *bright* and *lovely* characters than in his *works* here *below*. *This* is a ſtate, now, that anſwers *all ends*, and ſatisfies *all appetites*, let them be never ſo *various*, never ſo *boundleſs*. *Temporal* good, nay, a ſtate *accumulated* with all temporal goods, has ſtill ſomething *defective*, ſomething *empty in it: That which is crooked cannot be made ſtraight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.* And therefore *the eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing: but all things are full of labour; man cannot utter it.* And if *this*

were *not* the *ſtate* of *temporal* things, yet that *one* thought of *Solomon* that he muſt *leave* them, makes *good* the *charge* of *vanity and vexation:* and the *contrary* is that which compleats *heaven*; namely, that it is *eternal.* Were *heaven* to have an *end*, that *end* would make it *none. That death* would be as much *more intolerable* than *this* here, as the *joys* of *heaven* are *above* thoſe of *earth.* For the *terror*, and the *evil* of it, would be to be eſtimated, by the *perfection* of that *nature* and *happineſs* which it would put an *end* to. To *dye* in *paradiſe*, amidſt a *crowd* of *ſatiſfactions*, how much *more intolerable* were this, than to *dye* in thoſe *accurſed regions* that breed continually *briars* and *brambles*, *cares* and *ſorrows?* And now, I doubt not, but every one will readily acknowledge, that an *heaven*, were it *believed*, were *ſuch a fruit of Chriſtian Liberty*, *ſuch* a *motive* to it, as *none* could *reſiſt.* Did I *believe* this, have I heard *one* ſay, I would *quit* my *trade*, and all *cares* and *thoughts* of *this* world; and *wholly* apply myſelf to get that *other* you talk of. There was no *need* of going *thus* far: but this ſhews *what* the *natural influence* of this doctrine of a *life to come* is; and that it is generally owing to *infidelity*, where 'tis *fruſtrated* and *defeated. What* is in *this* caſe to be *done?* What *proof*, what *evidences*, are ſufficient to beget

faith

faith in *him*, who rejects *Chriſtianity* and all *divine revelation? He that hears not Moſes and the prophets, Chriſt* and his *apoſtles, neither will he believe though one roſe from the dead.* This *doctrine* of a *life to come* was generally *believed* by the *Gentile* world. It was indeed very much *obſcured*, but never *extinguiſhed*, by the addition of many *fabulous* and *ſuperſtitious* fancies; ſo *ſtrong* was the *tradition* or *reaſon*, or rather *both*, on *which* 'twas *built*. The *Jews* univerſally *embraced* it. The general *promiſes* of *God* to *Abraham* and *his ſeed*, and the ſeveral *ſhadows* and *types* of it in the *Moſaic* inſtitution, did *confirm* them in the *belief* of a *doctrine*, which, I do not doubt, had been *tranſmitted* to them even from *Enoch*, *Noah*, and *all* their pious *anceſtors*. Nor muſt we look upon the *Sadducees* amongſt the *Jews*, or the *Epicureans* amongſt the *Gentiles*, to be any *objection* againſt this *argument* of a *life to come*, founded in *tradition* and the univerſal *ſenſe* of *mankind:* becauſe *they* were not only *inconſiderable*, compared to the *body* of the *Jewiſh* or *Pagan* world, but alſo *deſerters* and *apoſtates* from the *philoſophy* and *religion* received. To what end ſhould I proceed from the *Gentile* and *Jew* to the *Chriſtian?* Were *Chriſtianity* entertained as it ought, the very *ſuppoſal* of any *doubt* concerning *a life to come* would be *impertinent*. *Here we* have numerous

demonſtrations

demonſtrations of it. Not only the *fortune* of *virtue* in *this* life, which is often very *calamitous*, but even the *origin* and *nature* of it, do plainly evince a *life to come*. For to *what* end can the *mortification* of the *body*, by *abſtractions* and *meditations*, be enjoined, if there be *no life to come?* What *need* is there of *renovation*, or *regeneration*, by the *Word* and *Spirit of God*, were there *no life to come?* One would think, the *common* end of this *natural* life might be well enough *ſecured* upon the *common* foundation of *reaſon* and *human laws*. What ſhould I here add, the *love* of *God*, and the *merits of Jeſus?* From *both* which we may derive many *unanſwerable* arguments of a *life to come*. For though, when we reflect upon it, it appears as much above our *merit*, as it is above our *comprehenſion*; yet when we conſider, that *eternal life is the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; what leſs than an *heaven* can we expect from an *infinite merit* and *almighty love?* The *love* of *God* muſt be *perfect* as *himſelf*: and the *merits* of *Jeſus* muſt be eſtimated by the *greatneſs* of his *Perſon* and his *ſufferings*. *He* that cannot be *wrought upon* by *theſe* and the like *goſpel arguments*, will be found, I doubt, *impenetrable* to all *others*. 'Tis in vain to argue with *ſuch* a one from *natural topicks*: and therefore I will *ſtop* here.

I ſhould now paſs on to the *third* thing, the *attainment of Chriſtian Liberty:* but this *chapter* is grown much too *big* already: and to the conſideration of the *fruit* of *this liberty*, which I have ſo long inſiſted on, nothing *more* needs to be added, but the obſervation of thoſe *rules*, which I ſhall lay down in the *following* chapters. For *whatever* advice will *ſecure* the ſeveral *parts* of our *liberty*, will conſequently ſecure the *whole*. I will therefore *cloſe* this *chapter* here, with a brief *exhortation*, to endeavour after *deliverance* from *ſin*. How *many* and *powerful motives* have we to it? Would we free ourſelves from the *evils* of *this* life? let us dam up the *ſource* of them, which is *ſin*. Would we ſurmount the *fear* of *death?* let us *diſarm* it of *its ſting*, and that is *ſin*. Would we *perfect* and *accompliſh* our *natures* with all *excellent* qualities? 'tis *righteouſneſs* wherein conſiſts the *image of God*, and *participation* of the *divine nature:* 'tis the *cleaning ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, and the perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*, that muſt *transform us from glory to glory*. Would we be maſters of the moſt glorious *fortunes?* 'tis *righteouſneſs* that will make us *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt:* 'tis the *conqueſt* of our *ſins*, and the *abounding* in *good works*, that will make us *rich towards God*, and

lay

lay up for us a good foundation for the life to come. Are we ambitious of *honour?* let us *free* our ſelves from the *ſervitude of ſin.* 'Tis *virtue* only, that is truly *honourable* and *praiſe-worthy:* and *nothing* ſurely can entitle us to ſo *noble* a *relation:* for this *allies* us to *God.* For, as our *Saviour* ſpeaks, *they* only are the *children of Abraham, who do the works of Abraham;* the *children* of *God,* who *do* the *works of God.* Theſe are *they,* who are *born again: not of the will of the fleſh, or of the will of man; but of God.* Theſe are *they,* who are *incorporated into the body of Chriſt;* and being *ruled* and animated by *his Spirit,* are *entitled* to all the bleſſed *effects* of *his merit* and *interceſſion.* Theſe are *they,* in a word, who have *overcome,* and *will,* one day, *ſit down with Chriſt in his throne; even as he alſo overcame, and is ſet down with his Father in his throne,* Rev. iii. 21. Good God! how *abſurd* and *perverſe* all our *deſires* and *projects* are! we complain of the *evils* of the *world;* and yet we *hug* the *cauſes* of them, and *cheriſh* thoſe *vices,* whoſe *fatal* wombs are ever big with numerous and intolerable *plagues.* We *fear death,* and would get *rid* of this *fear,* not by *diſarming,* but *ſharpening* its *ſting;* not by *ſubduing,* but *forgetting* it. We *love wealth* and *treaſure:* but 'tis that which is *temporal,* not *eternal.* *We receive*

honour

honour of one another; but we ſeek not that which comes from God only. We are fond of *eaſe* and *pleaſure*; and at the ſame time we *wander* from thoſe *paths* of *wiſdom* which alone can bring us to it. For, in a word, 'tis this *Chriſtian Liberty* that makes men *truly free:* not the being in bondage to *no man*, but to *no ſin:* not the doing what we *liſt*, but what we *ought*. 'Tis *Chriſtian Liberty* that makes us *truly great*, and *truly glorious:* for this alone renders us *ſerviceable* to *others*, and *eaſy* to ourſelves; *benefactors* to the *world*, and *delightſome* at *home*. 'Tis *Chriſtian Liberty* makes us *truly proſperous*, truly *fortunate*; becauſe it makes us *truly happy, filling us with joy and peace*, and *making us abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.*

CHAP. IV.

Of liberty, as it relates to original ſin. The nature of which conſidered chiefly with reſpect to its corruption. *How far this diſtemper of nature is curable. Which way this cure is to be effected.*

WHatever difficulties the doctrine of original ſin really be involved in, or ſeems at leaſt to ſome to be ſo, they will not concern me, who am no further obliged to

to conſider it, than as it is an impediment of Perfection; for though there be much diſpute about original ſin, there is little or none about original *corruption*; the *reality* of this is generally acknowledged, though the *guilt*, the ſinfulneſs or immorality of it, be controverted. And though here be diverſity of opinions concerning the effects of original *corruption* in eternity; yet there is no doubt at all made but that it incites and inſtigates us to actual ſin, and is the ſeed-plot of human folly, and wickedneſs. All men, I think, are agreed, that there is a byaſs and ſtrong propenſion in our nature towards the things of the world, and the body: that the ſubordination of the body to the ſoul, and of the ſoul to God, wherein conſiſts righteouſneſs, is ſubverted and overthrown: that we have appetites which claſh with, and oppoſe the commands of God; not only when they threaten violence to our nature, as in the caſes of confeſſion and martyrdom, but alſo when they only prune its luxuriancy and extravagance: that we do not only deſire ſenſitive pleaſure, but even to that degree, that it hurries and tranſports us beyond the bounds that reaſon and religion ſet us: We have not only an averſion for pain, and toil, and death; but to that exceſs, that it tempts us to renounce God, and our

our duty, for the ſake of carnal eaſe, and temporal ſafety. And finally, that we are ſo backward to entertain the belief of revealed truths, ſo prone to terminate our thoughts on, and confine our deſires within this viſible world as our portion, and to look upon ourſelves no other than the mortal and corruptible inhabitants of it; that this makes us ſelfiſh and ſordid, proud and ambitious, falſe, ſubtle, and contentious, to the endleſs diſturbance of mankind and our ſelves. That this, I ſay, is the ſtate of nature; that this is the corruption we labour under, all men, I think, are agreed: and no wonder; for did a controverſy ariſe about this, there would be no need to appeal any farther for the deciſion of it, than to one's own experience; this would tell every one that thus it is in fact; and reaſon, if we will conſult it, will tell us why it is ſo: for what other than this can be the condition of man, who enters the world with a ſoul ſo dark and deſtitute of divine light, ſo deeply immerſed and plunged into fleſh and blood, ſo tenderly and intimately affected by bodily ſenſations; and with a body ſo adapted and ſuited to the things of this world, and faſtened to it by the charms of pleaſure, and the bonds of intereſt, convenience and neceſſity? This account of original corruption agrees

very well with *that* St. *Paul* gives us of it, *Rom.* vii. and elſewhere: and with that aſſertion of our *Lord* and *Maſter*, on which he builds the neceſſity of *regeneration* by *water* and the *Holy Spirit*, John iii. 6. *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.*

7 Having thus briefly explained what I mean in this chapter by *original ſin*, I am next to conſider theſe two things.

1. How far this diſtemper of nature is curable.
2. Which way this cure is to be effected.

As to the firſt enquiry, I would not be underſtood to proceed in it with a regard to all the *regenerate* in general, but only to the *perfect*; for the ſtrength of original ſin cannot but be very different in new converts, or babes in grace, and in ſuch as are advanced to an habit of righteouſneſs. This being premiſed, I think, I may on good ground reſolve, that original ſin in the *perfect* man, may be ſo far reduced and maſtered, as to give him but very *rare* and *ſlight* diſturbance. This ſeems to me evident from the great change that muſt be wrought in him who is converted from a ſinner into a ſaint: *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are*

paſt

paſt away, behold all things are become new, 2 Cor. v. 17. And it is hard to conceive this new nature, without new propenſions and inclinations, not only different from, but repugnant to our former original and corrupt ones: or at leaſt we muſt ſuppoſe this new creation ſo far to have reformed and corrected the man, that original corruption has loſt the ſtrength and force which before it had. This will be more clear yet, if we obſerve never ſo ſlightly, the ſeveral parts of this great change. Firſt, The ſoul of an excellent perſon is filled with an unfeigned and habitual ſorrow for, and deteſtation of all ſin; *I hate*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt, every falſe way*. And how inconſiſtent is the ſtrength and heat of corrupt propenſions, with the tears and averſions of a true penitent? how tame is the body, how pure the mind, when the man is poſſeſſed with a firm and holy indignation againſt ſin, when he diſſolves in the pious tenderneſs of a contrite ſpirit! Next, the ſoul of a good man is poſſeſſed with an ardent love of *God*, and of *Jeſus*; with a firm belief, and a ſteddy hope of a bleſſed eternity; with enlightened eyes he beholds the vanity of all earthly things, and admires the ſolidity, the weight, and duration of heavenly glory: *He is riſen with Chriſt*, and therefore *ſeeks thoſe things that are above, where Chriſt ſits on the right hand of God*:

He has ſet his affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; for he is dead, and his life is hid with Chriſt in God. And muſt we not now ſuppoſe ſuch a one cleanſed and purified from all corrupt affections, when the very bent of his ſoul is quite another way? muſt we not ſuppoſe the force and ſtrength of depraved nature, overpowered and ſubdued by theſe heavenly affections? how mortified muſt ſuch a man be to the world, and to the body? how feeble is the oppoſition, that inferior nature can raiſe againſt a mind inveſted with ſo abſolute and ſovereign authority, and endowed with light and ſtrength from above? Laſtly, The perfect man has not only crucified the inordinate and ſinful luſts and affections of the body, but has alſo obtained a great maſtery, even over the *natural appetites* of it; how elſe can it be that his *deſires* and *hopes* are in *heaven*; that he *waits for the Lord from thence*; that he deſires to be *diſſolved* and *to be with Chriſt*; and *groans* to *be rid* of the *corruptible tabernacle* of the *body?* He that is thus above the *body*, may certainly be concluded to be in ſome degree above even the moſt *natural appetites*. He that has ſet himſelf free in a great meaſure even from his averſion to death, and in his affection at leaſt very much looſened the bond, the knot, that unites ſoul and body, may certainly very

very reaſonably be preſumed to be much more above all covetous, ambitious, or wanton inclinations. Theſe are the grounds, on which I attribute to the perfect man ſo high a degree of freedom from original ſin as I do in the propoſition laid down.

2*dly*, But yet I do not in the leaſt think, that the moſt perfect man upon earth can ſo extinguiſh the ſparks of original corruption, but that if he do not keep a watch and guard upon himſelf, they will gather ſtrength and revive again: and the reaſon of this is plain; becauſe it has a foundation in our very nature. The diſpute concerning the exiſtence of original corruption in us after baptiſm, or regeneration, is, methinks, a very needleſs one: for if it be about the notion we ought to entertain of it, that is, whether it be properly ſin or not, this is a contention about words; for what ſignifies it by what name we call this remainder of original pravity, when all grant that the ſtain and guilt of it is waſhed off and pardoned? But if it be about the force and efficacy of it, this indeed is a controverſy of ſome moment; but a very fooliſh one on one ſide: for to what purpoſe can it be, to ſay a great many ſubtil and puzzling things againſt a truth, that every man feels and experiments at one time or other? Upon the whole then, I may thus deſcribe the

liberty of the perfect man with respect to original sin: he has *mortified* it, though not utterly *extirpated* it; he has *subdued* it, though not *exterminated* it; and therefore he is not only free from sinful and inordinate lusts and affections, but also, in a far greater measure than other men, from those infirmities and irregularities, which are, as it were, the strugglings and ebullitions of original sin, not yet sufficiently tamed. He has advanced his victory very far, even over his natural appetites; he has no stronger inclination for the body, or for the world, and the things of it, than such as becomes a man that is possessed with a deep sense of the vanity of this world, and the blessedness of another. The world is in a high degree crucified to him, and he counts all things but dung and dross in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. His sorrows and his joys, his desires and his fears, be the occasion never so just or lawful, pass not the modest bounds of a wise moderation. He desires without impatience, cares and contrives, hopes and pursues, without anxiety or solicitude; he is cautious without fear and pusillanimity; he is sad without dejection or despondency, and pleasant without vanity. All this indeed shews him, not only to have conquered

quered ſin and folly, but in a great meaſure alſo his natural propenſion to them. But after all, this happy creature muſt remember, that he is ſtill in the body; in the body, whoſe appetites will ſoon paſs beyond their due bounds, if he be indulgent or careleſs: he muſt remember that he is not immutably holy; his underſtanding is not ſo clear and bright, but that it may be deceived; nor the bent of his affections ſo ſtrongly ſet on good, but that they may be perverted; and therefore he muſt be ſober and vigilant, and fear always. Thus have I ſtated the curableneſs of our original corruption. And as I think I have plainly the countenance of ſcripture; ſo I do not ſee, that I in the leaſt claſh with that clauſe in the ninth article of our church, which affirms concerning original ſin thus: *And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the luſt of the fleſh, called in Greek* Φρόνημα σαρκὸς, *which ſome do expound the wiſdom, ſome the ſenſuality, ſome the affection, ſome the deſire of the fleſh, is not ſubject to the law of God.* For this muſt not be underſtood ſurely, as if the fleſh did always luſt againſt the ſpirit in the regenerate, but only that the regenerate themſelves are liable and obnoxious to theſe luſtings; which, on ſuppoſal that the perfect man

were here thought upon by the compilers of this article, imports no contradiction to any thing I have delivered. The truth is, I have asserted no more concerning the curableness of original corruption, than what is necessary to secure the *interest* of *holiness*, as well as the *honour* of the *Word* and *Spirit*. I have too often had occasion to observe, that the stating our obligation to reduce original corruption too laxly, ministers not a little to the carnal confidence of supine and careless persons. How greedily do some imbibe, and how fond are they of this notion, that the flesh, even in the regenerate, does always lust against the spirit? And the next thing is to look upon their darling errors, as unavoidable infirmities, flowing from the incurable distemper of original sin. To the end therefore, that under colour and pretence of the impossibility of a perfect cure and restitution of our nature to perfect innocence and unspotted purity, we may not sit down contented in an impure state, and never advance to those degrees of health and innocence, which we may, and ought actually to arrive at; I think fit here, to guard the doctrine of original sin with this one general caution.

That we be very careful not to mistake contracted, for natural corruption; not to mistake

miſtake a ſuper-induced nature, defaced by all the ſlime and mud which popular errors and faſhions leave upon it, for original nature, or nature in that ſtate in which it enters the world. 'Tis, I doubt, a very hard thing to find but one arrived at any maturity of years, in whom nature is the ſame thing now that it was in the womb or the cradle; in whom there are no worſe propenſions than what neceſſarily flow from the frame and compoſition of his being. Alas! our original depravation, be it what it will, is very betimes improved by falſe principles and fooliſh cuſtoms; by a careleſs education, and by the blandiſhments and inſinuations of the world: and every man is ſo partial to himſelf, that he is very willing to have his defects and errors paſs under the name of natural and unavoidable ones, becauſe this ſeems to carry in it its own apology. This is a fatal error, and continues men in their vices; nay, gives them peace in them too, to their lives end: for why ſhould not a man forbear attempting what he deſpairs of effecting? To prevent which, I earneſtly deſire my reader to conſider, that all who have treated this doctrine of original ſin with any ſolidity or prudence, do carry the matter as far, at leaſt, as I have done: they teach not only, that original

corruption may be *pruned* and *lopped*, but that it may be cut *down*, *mortified* and *dried up*. That, ſince no man can aſſure himſelf how far he may advance his conqueſt over his natural corruption, and the intereſt of every man's ſafety and glory obliges him to advance it as far as he can; he muſt never ceaſe fighting againſt it, while it fights againſt him. That, ſince every ſin is ſo far mortal as it is voluntary, and has as much guilt in it as freedom, every man ought to be extremely jealous, leſt he be ſubject to any vicious inclination, that is in reality the product, not of nature, but of choice. And laſtly, ſince though much leſs than habitual goodneſs may conſtitute a man in a ſtate of grace; yet nothing leſs can produce Perfection, or a conſtant aſſurance of eternal happineſs; therefore no man ought to acquieſce, while he ſees himſelf ſhort of this; and every man ſhould remember, that his goodneſs ought to conſiſt in a habit of thoſe virtues to which he is by nature the moſt averſe. I have now diſpatched my firſt enquiry, and reſolved how far original ſin is curable. The next is,

§. 2. How this cure may be effected. And here 'tis plain what we are to aim at in general: for if original righteouſneſs conſiſts,

conſiſts, as I think it cannot be doubted, in the ſubordination of the body to the ſoul, and the ſoul to God; and original corruption, in the ſubverſion of this order; then the cure muſt conſiſt in reſtoring this ſubordination, by the weakning and reducing the power of the body, and by quickning and ſtrengthning the mind, and ſo re-eſtabliſhing its ſovereignty and authority. The ſcriptures accordingly let us know that this is the great deſign of religion, and the great buſineſs of man, 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. *And every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.* And this St. *Paul* illuſtrates and explains by his own example, in the following words: *I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly; ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection.* The preference given to the cares and appetites of the body, or the mind, is the diſtinguiſhing character which conſtitutes and demonſtrates man either holy or wicked: *They that are of the fleſh, do mind the things of the fleſh; and they that are of the Spirit, the things of the Spirit,* Rom. viii. 5. And the threats of the goſpel belong to the ſervants of the fleſh, its promiſes to the ſervants of the Spirit: *For if ye live after the*

the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live, Rom. viii. 13. *He that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting*, Gal. vi. 8. I grant that in theſe places and elſewhere very commonly as by the ſpirit is meant the mind enlightened and aided by the grace of God; ſo by the body or fleſh is meant our inferior nature; not juſt ſuch as it proceeds out of the womb, but as it is further depraved by a carnal and worldly converſation. However, ſince *original ſin* is the ſeed or root of *voluntary* or cuſtomary corruption, theſe texts do properly and directly enough ſerve to the confirmation of the doctrine for which they are alledged. This then is the great duty of man, this is the great end which he is always to have in his eye, the mortifying the body, and entirely ſubjugating it to the reaſon of the mind. Here the Chriſtian warfare muſt begin, and here end: for he, who has crucified the body with the luſts and affections thereof, has entered into reſt, as far as this life is capable of it: he, that lays the foundation of morals here, does build upon a rock; and he, that here puſhes his ſucceſs to the utmoſt point, has reached the higheſt round in the ſcale of Perfection,

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and given the finiſhing ſtrokes to holineſs and virtue. This I ſay then; he that will be free, muſt lay down as a general rule to himſelf, from which he muſt reſolve never to ſwerve, that he is by all rational and poſſible methods to diminiſh the ſtrength and authority of the body, and increaſe that of the mind. By this we ought to judge of the conveniencies or inconveniencies of our worldly fortunes; by this we are to determine of the innocence or malignity of actions; by this we are to form and eſtimate our acquaintance and converſation, and by this we are to judge of the bent and tendency of our lives; by this we are to regulate our diverſions; by this we may reſolve of the nature and degree of our pleaſures, whether lawful, whether expedient, or not: and in one word, by this we paſs a true ſentence upon the degrees and meaſures of our natural affections. There are many things that are in their own nature indifferent enough that prove not ſo to me; and there is ſuch a latitude in the degrees and meaſures of duty and deviations from it, that it is a very hard matter in ſeveral caſes to define nicely and ſtrictly what is lawful or unlawful: but I am ſure, in all caſes this is a wiſe and ſafe rule, that we are to aim at the ſtrengthning the authority of our minds,

minds, and the weakning the force and power of our carnal appetites. By conſequence, every man ought to examine himſelf, by what arts, by what practices the light of his underſtanding comes to be obſcured, the authority of his reaſon weakened, and the tenderneſs of his conſcience to be ſo much blunted and worn off: and when he has diſcovered this, he muſt avoid theſe things as temptations and ſnares; he muſt ſhun theſe paths, as thoſe that lead to danger and death; and whatever he finds to have a contrary tendency, theſe are the things that he muſt do, theſe are the things that he muſt ſtudy, contrive, and follow. How happy would a man be, how perfect would he ſoon grow, if he did conduct himſelf by this rule? How little need would he have of outward comforts; how little value would he have for power and honour, for the ſtate and pride of life? How little would he hunt after the pleaſures of ſenſe? What peace ſhould he maintain within, when he ſhould do nothing that were repugnant to the reaſon of his mind? What joy and hope would he abound with, when he ſhould have ſo many daily proofs of his integrity, as the living above the body would give him? And how would all this ſtrengthen and exalt the mind? what flights would it take

towards heaven, and how invincible would it prove to all temptations? Happy and perfect that man, who has the kingdom of God thus within him, whoſe life is hid with Chriſt in God! when Chriſt, who is his life, ſhall appear, he alſo ſhall appear with him in glory. This is a comprehenſive rule, and if well purſued, ſufficient of itſelf to do the work I am here aiming at: but that it may be more eaſily reduced to practice, I think it not amiſs to take a more particular view of it: and then it may be reſolved into theſe two:

1. We muſt lay due reſtraints upon the body.

2. We muſt invigorate and fortify the mind, partly by the light of the goſpel, and the grace of the Holy Spirit; and partly by accuſtoming it to retire and withdraw itſelf from the body.

§. 1. As to the reſtraints we are to lay upon the body, what they are, we eaſily learn from the ſcriptures: for firſt, theſe expreſly forbid us to gratify the luſts and affections of the fleſh; and that not only becauſe they are injurious to our neighbour, and a diſhonour to our holy profeſſion, but alſo becauſe they have an ill influence upon the ſtrength and liberty, the power

power and authority of the mind. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts which war againſt the ſoul,* 1 Pet. ii. 11. And whoever enters into the account of things, will eaſily diſcern this to be true; there is a deceitfulneſs in ſin, a ſenſuality in luſt: who ſees not that there is more attraction in the pride and oſtentation of life, than in the ſimplicity and plainneſs of it? That there is more temptation and allurement in riot and luxury, than in frugality and a competency? That the imagination of a *Solomon* himſelf cannot but be wretchedly abuſed, if he give it leave to wander and wanton in variety? In a word, if the mind follow a carnal or worldly appetite and fancy in all its exceſſes and debauches, it will ſoon find itſelf miſerably inſlaved and intoxicated; it will be wholly in the intereſt of the body, and wholly given up to the pleaſures of it. Secondly, Though the ſcripture do not prohibit ſome *ſtates* or *conditions* of this life, which ſeems as it were more nearly *allied* to, or at leaſtwiſe at leſs diſtance from the *luſts of the fleſh*, than others are; yet it forbids us to *covet* and *purſue them*. Thus St. *Paul*, Rom. xii. 16. *Mind not high things*. The apoſtle does not here oblige any man to degrade himſelf beneath his birth, or to fly from thoſe

thoſe advantages which God's providence and his own merits give him a juſt title to; but certainly he does oblige the Chriſtian not to aſpire ambitiouſly to great things, nor fondly to pride himſelf in ſucceſſes of this kind. So when a little after he commands us *in honour to prefer one another*, certainly he does not teach how to talk, but how to act; not how to court and compliment, but to deport ourſelves conſonant to thoſe notions with which charity towards our neighbour, and humility towards our ſelves ought to inſpire us. Thus again, we are not forbidden to be rich; no man is bound to ſtrip himſelf of thoſe poſſeſſions which he is born to, or to ſhut out that increaſe which God's bleſſing and his own diligence naturally bring in: but we are forbid to *thirſt after riches*, or to *value* ourſelves upon them, and commanded to be content with thoſe things that we have; and if God bleſs us with wealth, to enjoy it with modeſty and thankfulneſs, and diſpence it with liberality, 1 *Tim.* vi. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *Godlineſs with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and having food and rayment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition. For*

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the love of money is the root of all evil, which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves thro' with many ſorrows. Ver. 17, 18, 19. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate: laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* And to multiply no more inſtances of reſtraints of this or the like nature, thus we ought to ſtand affected towards *praiſe* and *reputation*, *intereſt* and *power*, *beauty*, *ſtrength*, &c. We muſt neither be too intent upon them, nor enjoy them with too much guſt and ſatisfaction; for this is that diſpoſition which appears to me to ſuit beſt with the ſpirit and deſign of the goſpel, and with the nature of ſuch things as being of a middle ſort, are equally capable of being either temptations or bleſſings, inſtruments of good or evil.

3*dly*, The ſcripture regulates and bounds our *natural* and *neceſſary* appetites, not ſo much by *nicely* defining the *exact* degrees and meaſures within which nature muſt be ſtrictly contained, as by exalted *examples* of, and *exhortations* to a *ſpiritual*, *pure*, and *heavenly* diſpoſition. Thus our Lord and Maſter ſeems to me to give ſome check

check to the ſtream of natural affection, and to call off his diſciples from it, to the conſideration of a ſpiritual relation; *Mark* iii. 34, 35. *And he looked round about on them which ſat about him, and ſaid, Behold my mother and my brethren: for whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is my brother, and my ſiſter, and mother.* To which words of our Lord, I may join thoſe of St. *Paul*, *Henceforth know we no man after the fleſh— yet now henceforth know we him no more*, 2 *Cor.* v. 16. The anſwer of our Lord to a diſciple who would have deferred his following him, till he had buried his father, *Matth.* viii. 21. and to him who begged leave to go and bid farewel firſt to his relations and domeſticks, *Luke* ix. 61. does plainly countenance the doctrine I here advance; and ſo does St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. vii. 29. ſo often cited by me. Not that our Saviour or his apoſtles did ever account our natural affections *vicious* and *impure*; for 'tis a vice to be without them, *Rom.* i. 31. Not that they went about to diminiſh or abate, much leſs to cancel the *duties* flowing from them: no; they only prune the *luxuriancy* of *untaught* nature, and correct the *fondneſſes* and *infirmities* of *animal* inclinations. Our natural affections may entangle and enſlave us, as well as unlawful and irregular ones, if we lay no reſtraint upon them. Religion indeed makes them

the ſeeds of virtue, but without it they eaſily betray us into ſin and folly. For this reaſon, I doubt not, left under pretence of ſatisfying our moſt natural and importunate appetites, we ſhould be enſnared into the love of this world, and entangled in the cares of it, our Saviour forbids us to take thought for to-morrow, even for the *neceſſaries* of to-morrow, *what we ſhall eat, and what we ſhall drink, and wherewithal we ſhall be cloathed*, Matth. vi. Theſe are the reſtraints laid upon the body in ſcripture; which if any man obſerve, he will ſoon diſcern himſelf as far purified and freed from original corruption, as human nature in this life is capable of. And that he may,

§. 2. He muſt fortify and invigorate the mind. And this muſt be done two ways. Firſt, By poſſeſſing it with the knowledge of the goſpel, and the grace of the Spirit. Secondly, By withdrawing it often from the body. As to the former branch of this rule, the neceſſity of it is apparent: ſince the ſtate of nature is ſuch as has before been deſcribed, we ſtand in need not only of *revelation* to *enlighten* us, but alſo of *grace* to *ſtrengthen* us; of the former to excite us to exert all the force and power we have; of the latter to enable us to do that which our natural force never

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can effect. It cannot be here expected that I ſhould treat of the operation of the Spirit, and the ways of obtaining it, grieving, and quenching it; this would demand a peculiar treatiſe. I will here only obſerve, that it is the work of the Spirit to *repair*, in ſome degree at leaſt, the *ruins* of the *fall*; to *rectify nature*; to *improve* our *faculties*, and to *imprint* in us the *divine image:* that meditation and prayer, and a careful conformity to the divine will, obtain and increaſe the grace of the Spirit: that negligence and preſumptuous wickedneſs grieve and extinguiſh it. As to the knowledge of the goſpel, I ſhall not need to ſay much here; I have conſidered this matter in the chapter of *Illumination*, and will only obſerve that the doctrines of the goſpel are ſuch, as, if they be thoroughly imbibed, do effectually raiſe us above a ſtate of *nature*, and ſet us free from the *power* and *prevalence* of our original corruption. Were we but once perſuaded, that we are ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth: that all carnal gratifications do war againſt the ſoul: that our ſouls are properly ourſelves, and that our firſt cares are to be for them; that God is himſelf our ſovereign good, and the fountain of all inferior good: that our perfection and happineſs conſiſt in the love and ſervice of him: that we have a mighty Mediator, who

once ~~died~~ for us, and ever lives to make intercession for us: that a *kingdom incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, is *reserved in heaven* for all meek, faithful, and holy souls: were we, I say, but once thoroughly persuaded of these truths, with what vigour would they impregnate our minds? How clear would be the convictions of conscience? How uncontroulable the authority of reason? How strong the instincts and propensions of the mind towards righteousness and virtue? These would alienate the mind from the world and the body, and turn the bent of it another way; these would inspire it with other desires and hopes, and make it form different projects from what it had before; *old things are done away, and all things are become new.* The second branch of this second particular rule is, that we must accustom ourselves to retire frequently from the commerce and conversation of the body. Whether the eating the forbidden fruit did open to the mind new scenes of sensuality which it thought not of, and so called it down from the serenity and heights of a more pure and contemplative life, to participate the turbulent pleasures of sense, immersing it as it were by this means deeper into the body, I pretend not to judge. But 'tis certain a too intimate conjunction of the mind with the

body,

body, and the ſatisfactions of it, does very much debaſe it. 'Tis our great unhappineſs, that the ſoul is always in the ſenſes, and the ſenſes are always upon the world; we converſe with the world, we talk of the world, we think of the world, we project for the world; and what can this produce, but a carnal and worldly frame of ſpirit? We muſt meditate on heavenly things; we muſt have our converſation in heaven; we muſt accuſtom ourſelves to inward and heavenly pleaſures, if we will have heavenly minds: we muſt let no day paſs, wherein we muſt not withdraw our ſelves from the body, and ſequeſter our ſelves from the world, that we may converſe with God and our ſouls. This will ſoon enable us to diſdain the low and beggarly ſatisfactions of the outward man, and make us long to be ſet free from the weight of this corruptible body, to breathe in purer air, and take our fill of refined and ſpiritual pleaſure. I have inſiſted thus long on the cure of original ſin, not only becauſe it is the *root* of all our *miſery*, but alſo becauſe there is ſuch an *affinity* between this and the ſin of infirmity, which I am next to ſpeak to, that the ſame remedies may be preſcribed to both; ſo that I am already eaſed of a part of the labour which I muſt otherwiſe have undergone in the following chapter.

I am now by the laws of my own method obliged to conſider the *effects* of this branch of *Chriſtian Liberty* in the *perfect* man, and to ſhew what influence it has upon his happineſs. But having, *ſect.* 1. *chap.* 4. diſcourſed at large of the ſubſerviency of Perfection to our happineſs; and in *ſect.* 2. *chap.* 3. of the happy effects of Chriſtian liberty in general, I have the leſs need to ſay much here on this head: yet I cannot wholly forbear ſaying ſomething of it. The conqueſt over original corruption, ſuch as I have deſcribed it, raiſes man to the higheſt pitch of Perfection that our nature is capable of; makes him approach the neareſt, that mortality can, to the life of angels, and plants him on the mount of God, where grace, and joy, and glory, ſhine always on him with more direct and ſtrong rays. Now is virtue *truly lovely*, and *truly happy*; now the aſſurance of the mind is never interrupted, its joy never overcaſt; it enjoys a perpetual calm within, and ſparkles with a peculiar luſtre that cannot be counterfeited, cannot be equalled. Some faint and partial reſemblance, I confeſs, of this virtue, or rather of this ſtate or conſummation of it, have I, though very rarely, ſeen in ſome maſterly ſtrokes of nature. I have obſerved in ſome, that ſweetneſs of temper; in others, that coldneſs and abſolute

ſolute command over themſelves with reſpect to the pleaſures; and in ſeveral that innate modeſty and humility, that natural indifference for the power, honour, and grandeur of life, that I could ſcarce forbear pronouncing, that they had ſo far each of them eſcaped the *contagion* of original corruption, and could not but bleſs and love them. But, after all, there is a vaſt difference between theſe *creatures* of *nature*, and thoſe of *grace:* the Perfection of the one is confined to this or that particular diſpoſition; but that of the other is in its degree univerſal: the Perfection of the one has indeed as much charm in it as pure nature can have; but the other has a mixture of ſomething divine in it; it has an heavenly tincture, which adds ſomething of *ſacredneſs* and *majeſty* to it, that nature wants: the Perfection of the one is indeed eaſy to its ſelf, and amiable to others; but the Perfection of the other is joy and glory within, and commands a veneration as well as love from all it converſes with. Bleſſed ſtate! when ſhall I attain thy lovely innocence! when ſhall I enter into thy divine reſt! when ſhall I arrive at thy ſecurity, thy pleaſure!

CHAP. V.

Of liberty, *with reſpect to ſins of* infirmity. *An enquiry into theſe three things.* 1. *Whether there be any ſuch ſins,* viz. *Sins in which the moſt perfect live and die.* 2. *If there are, what they be; or what diſtinguiſhes them from damnable or mortal ſins.* 3. *How far we are to extend the liberty of the perfect man in relation to* theſe *ſins.*

THIS is a *ſubject*, wherein the very *being* of *holineſs* or virtue, the *ſalvation* of man, and the *honour* of God, are deeply intereſted: for if we allow of ſuch ſins for *venial*, as really are not ſo, we deſtroy the notion, or evacuate the neceſſity of holineſs; endanger the ſalvation of man, and bring a reflection upon God as a favourer of impiety. On the other hand, if we aſſert thoſe ſins *damnable*, which are not really ſo, we miſerably perplex and diſturb the *minds* of men, and are highly injurious to the *goodneſs* of God; repreſenting him as a ſevere and intolerable maſter. But how important ſoever this ſubject be, there is no other, I think, in the compaſs of divinity, wherein ſo many writers have been ſo unfortunately engaged; ſo that it is overgrown with diſpute and controverſy, with confuſion and obſcurity, and numberleſs abſurdities and contra-

contradictions. This I have thought neceſſary to obſerve in the entrance of my diſcourſe, not to inſult the performances of others, or to raiſe in the reader any great expectation for my own; but indeed for a quite contrary reaſon, namely, to diſpoſe him to a favourable reception of what I here offer towards the rendering the doctrine of ſins of infirmity, intelligible, and preventing the diſſervice which miſtakes about it do to religion.

By ſins of infirmity, both *ancients* and *moderns*, *papiſts* and *proteſtants*, do, I think, underſtand ſuch ſins as are conſiſtent with a ſtate of grace and favour; and from which the beſt men are never intirely freed in this life, though they be not imputed to them. This then being taken for granted, I ſhall enquire into theſe three things.

1. Whether there be any ſuch ſins, ſins in which the moſt perfect live and die.

2. If there are, what theſe be. What it is that diſtinguiſhes them from *damnable* or *mortal* ones.

3. How far we are to extend the *liberty* of the perfect man in relation to *theſe*.

1. Whether there be any ſuch. That the beſt men are not without errors, without defects and failings, and that not only in their paſt life, or unregenerate ſtate, but their beſt, and moſt perfect one, is a truth which

which cannot, one would think, be controverted: for what *understanding* is there, which is not liable to *error?* What *will*, that does not feel something of *impotence*, something of *irregularity?* What *affections*, that are merely human, are ever *constant*, ever *raised?* Where is the *faith*, that has no *scruple*, no *diffidence?* the *love* that has no *defect*, no *remission?* the *hope*, that has no *fear* in it? What is the *state*, which is not liable to *ignorance*, *inadvertency*, *surprize*, *infirmity?* Where is the *obedience*, that has no *reluctancy*, no *remissness*, no *deviation?* This is a truth, which, whether men will or no, they cannot chuse but feel; the confessions of the holiest of men bear witness to it. And the pretension of the *Quakers*, to a sinless and perfect state, is abundantly confuted by that answer one of the most eminent of them makes to an objection, which charges them with arrogating and assuming to themselves infallibility and perfection, *viz. That they were so far infallible and perfect, as they were led by the Spirit of God.* For what is this, but to desert and *betray*, not to defend their cause? 'Tis plain then, as to matter of fact, that the most *perfect* upon earth are not without frailties and infirmities; and such infirmities, as discover themselves in actual slips and errors. But

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the queſtion is, whether theſe are to be accounted *ſins?* I muſt confeſs, if we ſtrictly follow the language of the ſcripture, we ſhould rather call them by ſome other name; for this does ſo generally underſtand by ſin, a deliberate tranſgreſſion of the law of God, that it will be very difficult to produce *many* texts wherein the word *ſin* is uſed in any other ſenſe. As to *legal* pollutions, I have not much conſidered the matter. But as to *moral* ones, I am in ſome degree confident, that the word ſin does generally ſignify ſuch a tranſgreſſion as by the goſpel covenant is puniſhable with death, and *rarely* does it occur in any other ſenſe: I ſay *rarely*; for if I be not much miſtaken, the ſcripture does *ſometimes* call thoſe infirmities, I am now talking of, ſins. But what if it did not? 'Tis plain, that every deviation from the law of God, if it has any concurrence of the will in it, in ſtrict ſpeaking is *ſin:* and 'tis as plain that the ſcripture does frequently give us ſuch deſcriptions and characters, and ſuch names of theſe ſins of infirmity, as do oblige us both to ſtrive and watch againſt them and repent of them. For it calls them, ſpots, errors, defects, ſlips, and the like. But, what is, laſtly, moſt to my purpoſe, it is plain, that this diſtinction of ſins, into mortal and venial,

venial, or ſins of infirmity, has its foundation in expreſs texts of ſcripture. Numerous are the texts cited to this purpoſe: but he that will deal fairly muſt confeſs, that they are moſt of them improperly and impertinently urged, as relating either to falls into temporal calamity; or to mortal, not venial ſins; or to the ſins of an unregenerate ſtate; or to a comparative impurity, I mean the impurity of man with reſpect to God, a form of expreſſion frequent in *Job*. I will therefore content myſelf to cite three or four, which ſeem not liable to theſe exceptions. *Deut.* xxxii. 4. *They have corrupted themſelves; their ſpot is not the ſpot of his children: they are a perverſe and crooked generation.* Here two things ſeem to be pointed out to us plainly: *Firſt*, that the children of God are not without their ſpots. *Secondly*, That theſe are not of the ſame nature with thoſe of the wicked; in compariſon with thoſe wilful and perverſe tranſgreſſions, the children of God are, elſewhere, pronounced blameleſs, without offence, without ſpot, *Pſalm* xix. 12, 13. *Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults: keep back alſo thy ſervant from preſumptuous ſins, let them not have dominion over me; then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great tranſgreſſion.* Here again

again the *Pſalmiſt* ſeems to me to place uprightneſs in freedom from deliberate or mortal ſin, and to admit of another ſort of tranſgreſſions, in which even upright men ſlip ſometimes. Nor does the *Pſalmiſt* here only aſſert venial ſins; but he ſeems to me to ſuggeſt the ſprings and ſources of them, namely, ſome ſecret diſpoſitions in our nature to folly and error, which he prays God to cleanſe and free him from more and more; *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults.* The word *fault* is not in the original; but ſomething of that kind muſt be ſupplied to render the ſenſe intire in our language. The words of *Solomon, Prov.* xx. 9. ſeem to relate to this corruption lurking in us, and never utterly to be extirpated; *Who can ſay I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my ſin?* For if this ſhould be applied to mortal ſin, every one ſees, that it will contradict an hundred places in ſcripture, which attribute to righteous men, purity of heart, and deliverance from ſin. Laſtly, *James* iii. 2. we are told plainly, that *in many things we offend all,* πταίομεν ἅπαντες, not ſinners only, but righteous and upright men, have their defects and ſlips. And accordingly there is not any life which we have the hiſtory of in ſcripture, how excellent ſoever the perſon be, but we meet with ſome of theſe recorded;

recorded; as will appear from those several instances I shall produce, when I come to describe the nature of these sins. And certainly, when *David* says of himself, *My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head:* he that shall interpret this place of mortal and presumptuous sins, will both contradict the scriptures, which acquit him, except in the matter of *Uriah*, and highly wrong the memory of *David*, making him a prodigy of wickedness, instead of a saint. Nor does *that* make any thing against me, which he adds in the next words, *My heart fails me*; or that in the foregoing verse, *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.* For I do not affirm that the *Psalmist* here has regard only to sins of infirmity exclusively of others: no; he reckons all together, and so discerns the one aggravated by the other; and the guilt of all together, very far enhanced. Nor do I, *secondly*, interest myself here in that dispute between protestants and papists, whether sins of infirmity are not damnable in their own nature, though not imputed under the covenant of grace? Nor do I, lastly, examine what a vast heap of sins of infirmity may amount to, though the guilt of this or that alone were not so fatal. I have then, I think, proved the matter in question; having shewed,

ſhewed, both from the experience of mankind and the ſcripture, that the beſt men have their infirmities and defects; and that theſe may properly enough be called ſins. I think it ſuperfluous to prove, that they conſiſt with a ſtate of ſalvation; ſince 'tis not by any, that I know of, denied; and may be eaſily enough made out, from what I have already ſaid. I am now to enquire,

§. 2. What theſe ſins be; and how diſtinguiſhed from mortal or damnable ones. To this purpoſe we may diſtinguiſh human actions (under which I compriſe both internal and external) into three ſorts: voluntary, involuntary, and mixt.

§. 1. There are actions properly and truly voluntary; ſuch are thoſe deliberate tranſgreſſions of a divine law, which man commits in oppoſition to the direct remonſtrances of conſcience; he knows the action is forbid; he ſees the turpitude and obliquity of it; he is not ignorant of the puniſhment denounced againſt it, and yet he ventures upon it: this is plainly mortal, damnable ſin; and I cannot think, that any circumſtance or pretence whatever can render it venial. And therefore I muſt be pardoned, if I cannot be of their opinion, who ſuppoſe, that the ſmallneſs of the matter, the reluctancy of conſcience, or the length and force of a temptation, can

ſo ſoften and mitigate a voluntary tranſgreſſion, as to diminiſh it into a ſin of infirmity. 1. As to the ſmallneſs of the matter. Some cannot but think thoſe tranſgreſſions venial, which are, for the matter of them, ſo ſlight and inſignificant, that they ſeem to be attended by no miſchievous conſequence, nor to offer any diſhonour to God, nor injuſtice to man. But I doubt this notion of venial ſin has no ſolidity in it; for either men perform ſuch actions deliberately, or indeliberately; knowing them to be ſinful, or believing them to be innocent. Now, if we perform any action deliberately, and knowing it to be ſinful, we never ought to look upon this as a *little* ſin, much leſs a *venial* one. The reaſon of this is plain. The firſt notion that every man has of ſin, is, that it is forbidden by, and diſpleaſing to God; and then to do that deliberately, which we know will provoke God, is an argument of a fearleſs and irreligious heart, a heart deſtitute of the love of God, the love of righteouſneſs, and heaven. But if a man tranſgreſs in a *trifling inſtance indeliberately*; this alters the caſe; for the matter not being of importance enough to excite the intention and application of the mind; and there being conſequently no malignity of the will in an action, where there was no concurrence of the judgment, I cannot

cannot but think, this may very well pass for an human infirmity; for all that fault that can be here laid to the charge of man is, incogitancy or inadvertency; and that too as excusable a one as can be. Lastly, where the matter of an action is very trifling and inconsiderable, and draws after it no ill consequence, either with respect to God or Man; in this case, if a man judge it no sin, I cannot think it is any to him; though by a nice and scrupulous construction, it may fall within the compass of some divine prohibition. The distinction of the schoolmen is good enough here; it is besides the law, but not against it: or it is against the letter, but not the design and intention of the law of God. I cannot think that it is consistent with the infinite goodness of God, to punish such things as these with eternal misery, or that it can become a man of sense seriously to afflict his soul for them. I cannot for my life persuade myself, that I should provoke God, if passing through a field of my neighbour's corn or pease, I should pull off an ear or cod; or passing through his orchard, should eat an apple. The notion I have of God, and the great end and design of his laws, will not suffer me to entertain such trifling, weak, and superstitious fancies. And here I cannot but

take notice of two things, which very much perplex the minds of ſome good people; that is, an idle *word*, and *jeſting*: concerning both which, 'tis very plain, that ſuch are miſerably miſtaken; and that they are no ſins at all, unleſs unreaſonable and ſuperſtitious ſcruples make them ſo: this I ſay on ſuppoſition that by idle word, they mean *only* ſuch talk, as does not tend to edification; and by jeſting, only *that* which is innocent and divertive. By an idle word (*Matt.* xii.) our Saviour plainly means a blaſphemous word, if that ſaying of our Saviour of every *idle word*, &c. be to be limited and confined by the ſenſe of the context: for the occaſion of the aſſertion of our Lord, was the blaſphemy which the *Jews* belched out againſt his miracles. Or if our Lord here, on this occaſion, advances a general doctrine, then, by an idle word, we muſt underſtand a wicked one, proceeding from a corrupt and naughty heart; and tending as directly to promote impiety, as gracious and wholeſome diſcourſe does to promote edification. This is evident from *ver.* 25. *A good man, out of the good treaſure of the heart, bringeth forth good things*; and an *evil man, out of the evil treaſure, bringeth forth evil things.* And *ver.* 37. *For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.*

ed. By *jeſting*, *Eph.* v. 4. the apoſtle underſtands the *modiſh raillery* of the *Greeks*, which was generally made up of *prophaneneſs* and *wantonneſs*, or briſk and ſharp ironies. This is plain, both from the company we find it in, αἰσχρότης καὶ μωρολογία, filthineſs and fooliſh ſpeaking; and from the character given it in common with the other two, Τὰ μὴ ἀνήκοντα, being the very ſame that is given the moſt infamous and vileſt luſts and paſſions. *Rom.* i. 28. *Things not convenient* is a diminutive expreſſion, implying ſuch things as contain much turpitude and wickedneſs in them. *Beza*, as appears by his notes, reads ἢ not καὶ, in this place, fooliſh ſpeaking, *or*, not *and* jeſting; which (as he obſerves) makes jeſting the ſame thing with fooliſh ſpeaking or buffoonry: and juſtifies that jeſting, which conſiſts in a pleaſant and divertive facetiouſneſs, from 1 *Kings* xviii. 27. 2 *Kings* iii. 23. *Iſai.* xiv. 11.

2. Some think that the mere reluctancy and oppoſition of conſcience againſt ſin, is ſufficient to conſtitute a ſin of Infirmity. And this has received no ſmall countenance from ſuch an interpretation of *Rom.* vii. as makes holineſs to be nothing elſe but a viciſſitude of deſires and actions, repugnant to one another. But at this rate no man's ſins would be damning

but his whoſe conſcience was ſeared; and when one's heart did condemn one, God would be ſure to acquit one: which agrees very ill with St. *John*, *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*, 1 *John* iii. 21. No man, unleſs arrived at a reprobate ſenſe, can do that which is evil, without reluctancy; for his conſcience will forbid him, as long as it has the leaſt degree of tenderneſs in it; and reſtrain him as far as it has power. And as to *Rom.* vii. it has been abundantly conſidered; and, I think, ſufficiently proved to belong to thoſe, who are the ſervants of ſin; as *Rom.* viii. does to thoſe who are ſet free. St. *Auſtin* indeed tells us, that he underſtood that chapter at firſt as the *Pelagians* did, for a perſon under the law, and under the power of ſin, but that he found himſelf conſtrained afterwards to underſtand it of St. *Paul* himſelf. I will not examine the ſolidity of his reaſons: 'tis enough to me, that his change of opinion does religion no harm: for he is ſo far from making a ſtate of holineſs to conſiſt with acts of deliberate ſin againſt conſcience, that he will not excuſe ſo much as rebellious motions and appetites, if conſented to. All that he contends for, in a good man, from this chapter is, that lapſed nature will ſometimes exert itſelf, even in the

the beſt men, in diſorderly and diſtempered appetites.

3. Others, laſtly, will have thoſe ſins, into which we fall, either overpowered by the ſtrength or wearied out by the aſſiduity or length of a temptation, paſs for Infirmities. But this opinion has as little ground as the two former. I can find no ſcripture that countenances this notion. There are indeed ſome of great reputation, who have promoted it. But, I think, the words of St. *Paul* make againſt it, 1 *Cor.* x. 13. *There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape; that ye may be able to bear it.* The deſign of which words is certainly to encourage Chriſtians againſt the biggeſt temptations by an aſſurance of relief from God, proportionable to our neceſſities; and conſequently muſt imply, that if we yield to a temptation, 'tis our own fault. God expects we ſhould ſtand firm under the higheſt trials. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,* Rev. ii. 10. *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my father in his throne,* Rev. iii. 21. *But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my*

Father which is in heaven, Matt. x. 33. If therefore, by ſins of Infirmity, men mean, ſuch as are conſiſtent with the ſtate of grace, *i. e.* ſuch as good men may frequently fall into, without forfeiting the peace of conſcience, and the favour of God, I cannot poſſibly think that any deliberate ſin can be ſuch, upon the ſcore of the temptation; or that any of thoſe ſins, reckoned in the catalogue, *Gal.* v. and *Eph.* v. can be ſuch on the account of the violence or perſeverance with which they attack us. But, ſecondly, if by ſins of Infirmity, they mean ſuch ſins as righteous men are liable to; I know not what they are from which they are exempted. But if, laſtly, by ſins of infirmity, they mean ſuch, for which God is more eaſily intreated; then there is no queſtion to be made, but that there is a difference in ſins; which is to be eſtimated by the different meaſures of grace and knowledge; by the different degrees of deliberation and ſurprize; and by the force or weakneſs, the continuance or ſhortneſs, of a temptation: and, finally, by the different effects and tendency of ſins. To all which, I do not queſtion, but that the ſpirit has regard in thoſe directions, which it gives us for our behaviour towards ſuch as fall, *Gal.* vi. 1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, we which are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of meekneſs*; con-

conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted. And of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference: and others ſave with fear, pulling them out of the fire, Jude 22, 23.

§. 2. A ſecond ſort of actions are ſuch as we call involuntary; that is, thoſe wherein we exerciſe no deliberation, no choice. Some have reduced ſins of infirmity to this head, but with what colour of reaſon any one may judge. For ſince actions truly *involuntary*, are neither the objects of the underſtanding nor will, 'tis hard to conceive what morality there can be in them. The grounds on which this opinion is built are ſuch as theſe. Firſt, the meaſure, ſay they, of good and evil is the law of God; but involuntary and unavoidable actions are not a proper ſubject of laws: for to what purpoſe is it to preſcribe rules, or to propoſe rewards and puniſhments to ſuch actions, as are no way ſubject to our choice? Secondly, They tell us, 'tis inconſiſtent with the goodneſs of God, and the riches of goſpel grace, to impute thoſe things to a man as damnable ſins, which fall not within the compaſs of his power or deliberation. Now, I muſt confeſs, I am ſo far from denying any actions, that can lay a juſt claim to this apology, to be venial, that I cannot forbear thinking, that they are

not ſinful: for *where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion.* But how does this way of arguing for the excuſableneſs of involuntary trangreſſions, conſiſt with thoſe other doctrines which they maintain concerning them; namely, that we are bound to repentance for them; that theſe ſins are not venial in their own nature, but only through the favour of God? For the law, taken in its rigour, denounces death againſt all ſin in general, without limitation or exception; ſo that if God ſhould judge rigorouſly, even involuntary ſin would fall under that ſentence, *The wages of ſin is death.* This, I muſt confeſs, ſeems to me very incoherent. For if an action be of that nature, that it cannot properly be the matter or ſubject of a law, how can it fall under the condemnation of law? If it be of that nature that it is incapable of any moral regulation, nor ſubject to the influence of reward or puniſhment, how can it be mere matter of grace that a man is not damned for it? In a word, if an action be truly and properly involuntary, it can by no means be ſin; and if it be voluntary, it is ſubject to the regulation of laws: 'tis a proper inſtance of deliberation and freedom, and capable of rewards and puniſhments. And the truth is, the one needs no apology, and the other is not capable of any; the one is a mortal

ſin,

ſin, and the other no ſin at all. And therefore we muſt look for venial ſin in ſome other ſpecies of action.

§. 3. The laſt claſs of actions are thoſe which are of a mixt nature; partly voluntary, and partly involuntary: and here, I think, we muſt place ſins of Infirmity, by whatever names we may call them. For theſe ſurely, if they are to be ranked (as by all they are) amongſt actual ſins, muſt be ſuch actions as have in them, ſomething of voluntary, ſomething of involuntary, much of human frailty, and ſomething of ſinful; much of unavoidable, and ſomething of moral obliquity. Theſe are the tranſgreſſions which the ſcripture ſeems to me, to intend by errors, defects, ſlips, motes, the ſpots of God's children; and theſe certainly, if any, muſt be the ſins that conſiſt with a ſtate of grace. For theſe do not imply a deliberate wickedneſs in the will, much leſs an habitual one; nay, they do not include in them any *wickedneſs* at all, ſtrictly ſpeaking, but are truly the effects of human frailty, and the unhappy circumſtances of this mortal life. Thus then I deſcribe a venial ſin; it has in it ſo much of voluntary as to make it ſin, ſo much of involuntary as to make it frailty; it has ſo much of the will in it, that

that it is capable of being reduced; and yet ſo much of neceſſity in it, it is never utterly to be extirpated: it has ſomething in it criminal enough to oblige us to watch againſt it, and repent of it; and yet ſo much in it pitiable and excuſable, as to intitle us to pardon under the covenant of grace. And thus I diſtinguiſh venial from mortal ſin: mortal ſin proceeds from a heart, either habitually corrupted, or deceived and captivated for the time; but venial ſin reſults from the imperfections and infelicities of our nature, and our ſtate. Mortal ſin is truly voluntary and deliberate in the riſe and birth of it, and miſchievous and injurious in its conſequence: but venial ſin is very far indeliberate in its beginning, and, if not indulged, almoſt harmleſs in its effects: deficiency is as it were the eſſence of the one, malignity of the other; in the one we ſee more of frailty, in the other more of wickedneſs: in the one ſomething nearly allied to neceſſity, in the other to preſumption: the one is the tranſgreſſion of the law of perfection, the other of the law of ſincerity: the one is repugnant to the letter, the other to the deſign and end of the law: the one is a violation of God's commands, taken in the moſt favourable conſtruction, the other a violation of them in a rigorous one. That this

this was the notion of St. *Auſtin*, St. *Jerome*, and others, who impugned the ſinleſs Perfection of the *Pelagians*, is very plain. 1. From the diſtinction they made between Καχία and ἁμάρτημα, *Crimen* and *Peccatum*, i. e. between wickedneſs and defects, between crimes and faults; for this is plainly the ſenſe wherein they uſed theſe words: And next from thoſe very clear and lively deſcriptions of venial ſin, which occur frequently in St. *Auſtin*, after whom 'tis well known, others writ. Such is that * *through ignorance or infirmity, for want of exerting our utmoſt ſtrength againſt concupiſcence, we are drawn away by it to ſome unlawful things; and the worſe we are, ſo much the more and the oftner; but the better we are, ſo much the leſs and the ſeldomer we do give way to it.* And thus † St. *Jerome* imputes venial ſin to our not making uſe of our utmoſt ſtrength and diligence. I might content myſelf with having given this general deſcription of ſins of infirmity, did I not know how ill a talent ſome people have at applications

* —— *Fit per Ignorantiam vel Infirmitatem, non exertis adverſus eam totis viribus voluntatis, eidem ad illicita etiam nonnulla cedamus, tanto magis & crebrius quanto deteriores, tanto minus & rarius quanto meliores ſumus.* Tom. 7. *De* Peccat. Rem. p. 689.

† *Hoc & nos dicimus, poſſe Hominem non peccare, ſi velit, pro tempore, pro loco, pro imbecillitate corporea, quamdiu intentus eſt Animus, quamdiu chorda nullo vitio laxatur in* Cithara, *Dial.* 3. *adv. Pelag.* p. 201.

of

of generals to any particular case; and how little satisfactory such account is to the weak and scrupulous. For the sake of these therefore, I think fit to be a little more distinct and particular on this argument. In venial sins then, two things must be considered,

1. The matter of it.
2. The manner of committing it.

1. As to the matter, I conceive it ought to be *slight* and *inconsiderable*. There is no room for a venial sin in things of a crying, provoking nature; as in adultery, idolatry, murther; for in these, the injustice and wickedness, with respect to God and man, is palpable and formidable; and can never, for aught I see, be extenuated by any circumstances into sins of infirmity. But when I say the matter of the sin of infirmity must not be detestable and crying provocation, I do not mean to extend this to the first *tendencies* and *dispositions* even towards such sins. Thus, tho' adultery cannot be a venial sin, yet the first sallies of the desire, the first glances and wandrings of the eye, may. And the same thing may be said of the first motions towards any other sin.

2. As to the next thing to be considered in a venial sin, that is, the *manner* of committing it, it must proceed from *ignorance*, *frailty*, or *surprize*.

1. From *ignorance*. By ignorance I do not mean that which is utterly *invincible*, but that which has ſome *defect*, ſome *frailty*, ſome *degree of negligence* in it. Of this kind, I take thoſe errors to be, againſt which *David* prays, *Pſalm* xix. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults.* He that conſiders human nature, and the power of education, the influences and prejudices which we ſuck in betimes, and ſuch like, will eaſily acknowledge, that there may be ſuch errors. When we have uſed a *moral diligence* in examining our lives, and trying our own hearts; yet conſidering the vaſt variety of duties we are to run through, no humble man can be confident, that he has omitted nothing, that he is miſtaken in nothing. This I take to be the ſenſe of *Solomon*, Prov. xx. 9. *Who can ſay, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my ſin?* And this I take to be the ſenſe of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. iv. 4. *For I know nothing by myſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* There are miſtakes and errors, which might indeed have been prevented or removed, by the *ſtricteſt* impartiality, and the ſtricteſt diligence. But, alas! how often do good men fall ſhort of both theſe? How common is it for good men to be too far tranſported by the beſt of principles, even zeal? How often

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do good men mix their errors in reproof and reprehenſion, and in one and the other, they diſcern it not?

2. *Surprize* and *inadvertency* is another thing that renders ſin *venial*. The multitude of affairs and temptations, the ſuddenneſs and unexpectedneſs of ſome unuſual temptation, or ſomething of this kind, may betray a good man into ſome ſlips or errors, in a word or deed. This I take to be the caſe of *Sarah*, when ſhe ſaid *I laughed not*: of *Jonah*, when he replied upon God, *I do well to be angry*, *Jon.* iii. Of *David*, when he pronounced raſhly, *do thou and Ziba divide the Land.* 2 *Sam.* xvi. 4. Of *Saul* and *Barnabas*, when they broke out into heat and anger. But that which was a ſin of *infirmity* in the beginning, became, I doubt, a *deliberate* one in the end, when they parted from one another. Some extend this circumſtance of ſurprize to excuſe ſins, which imply notorious wickedneſs, and are of very ill conſequence; but, I think, very erroneouſly. 'Tis true, theſe ſins of ſurprize, whatever the matter of them be, are generally conceived to be much extenuated through want of opportunity to ſummon our ſtrength, and to make uſe of mature and ſober deliberation; eſpecially where the temptation is not *only ſudden* but *violent* too. For in this caſe, the ſoldier of Chriſt, taken, as it were, in an ambuſh,

ambuſh, or blown up with a mine, ſeems to be loſt and defeated before he diſcerns his danger: I do not doubt then, but this ſuddenneſs of a temptation does very much diminiſh the guilt of a ſin. But we ought to remember too, that there are many things that do abate and take off from this excuſe: as firſt, it is not eaſy to conceive how any thing that is a direct wickedneſs, that is a ſin of a deeper dye than ordinary, on the account of its miſchievous conſequences, ſhould make its approach ſo ſilently, and ſo ſuddenly, that we ſhould fall into it undiſcernibly. Secondly, The Chriſtian is bound to ſhun not only every evil, but every *appearance* of it; and 'tis hard to imagine, that a ſincere man, who does indeed ſtrain at a *gnat*, ſhould ſwallow a *camel*. He that preſerves the tenderneſs of conſcience, as he will have an *averſion* for *ſmall ſins*; ſo will he have an *horror* for *great ones*. Thirdly, The mind of a Chriſtian ought to be poſſeſſed and awed by the fear of God; and *that* not a ſlight and tranſient, but a deep and laſting one. The *Pſalmiſt* was not content to ſay, *I am afraid of thy judgments*; but to expreſs how thoroughly this fear had ſeized him, he adds, *my fleſh trembleth for fear of thee*, Pſal. cxix. And certainly this fear is a ſort of impenetrable armour, which extinguiſhes

extinguiſhes all the fiery darts of the devil. In vain is the ſuddenneſs, or the briſkneſs of a temptation, unleſs we firſt lay aſide this ſhield. Fourthly, We are bound to be always on our watch and guard; and therefore, if we relax our diſcipline, if we live ſecure and careleſs, if we raſhly caſt our ſelves upon dangers, our ſin then will be but the conſequence of our folly; and therefore, one error cannot be an excuſe, or an apology for another. I think therefore the apology of ſurprize ſhould be confined and limited to *ſlight offences*; it cannot properly have room in *great ones*, or if it have, it may be urged in *mitigation* of our puniſhment; but never, I doubt, for *total impunity*.

3. Laſtly, Venial ſin has its riſe from the defects and imperfections of our *nature*, and the diſadvantageous circumſtances of our *ſtate*. Here come in the failures and defects in the *meaſures* and *degrees* of duty; if theſe can be properly reckoned for ſins: I ſay, if they can; for I do not ſee that this is good argument: we are bound to the higheſt degree of love by that law, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*; therefore whatſoever falls ſhort of the higheſt and moſt abſolute degeee of love, is a *ſin*: for at this rate, whatever were ſhort of

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Perfection, would be ſin. We muſt love nothing better than God, nothing equal to him: this will conſtitute us in a ſtate of ſincerity. What is farther required is, that we are bound to *aim* at, and *purſue* after the higheſt and moſt perfect degrees of love; but we are not bound under pain of *damnation* to *attain* them. But on the other hand, I readily grant, that our falling ſhort in the degrees of faith, love, hope, and the like, may be properly reckoned amongſt ſins, when they ſpring from the defects of vigilance and induſtry: and if theſe defects be ſuch as can conſiſt with ſincerity, then are the imperfections, or the abatements of our virtues, pardonable; and then only. Here again fall in *omiſſions*, *wandring thoughts*, *dulneſs* and *heavineſs* in duty, the ſhort *titillations* of ſome *irregular fancies*, *forgetfulneſs*, ſlight and ſhort *fits* of *envy*, *diſcontent*, *anger*, *ambition*, *gaiety* of mind. Thus we find the diſciples falling aſleep when they ſhould have prayed, *Matt.* xxvi. and *David* praying *quicken thou me*, Pſal. cxix. Thus his ſoul too was often caſt down, and diſquieted within him, *Pſal.* xlii. 2 *Chron.* xxx. 18, 19. *Job* curſed the day of his birth. In ſhort, our natures are *human*, not *angelical*; and our ſtate is ſo full of variety of accidents, that they are too apt to diſcompoſe the mind, and divert it from its great end. The

ebbs and flows of blood and ſpirits, and an unlucky conſtitution, or a diſtemper; the multitude or confuſion of affairs; the violence or the length of trials; the eaſe and flattery of proſperity; the wearineſs of the body, or of the mind; the incommodiouſneſs of fortune, roughneſs of converſation; theſe, and a thouſand other things are apt to produce defects and failures in our obedience, ſhort diſorders in our affections; and ſuch emotions and eruptions as abundantly prove the beſt to be but men; and the higheſt Perfection, if it be but human, to be wanting and defective. I think I have now omitted nothing neceſſary to form a true notion of the ſin of infirmity. My next buſineſs therefore is, to conſider,

§. 3. How far the *liberty* of the perfect man, in reſpect of *venial ſin*, ought to be extended. There is great affinity between venial and original ſin; and therefore the perfect man's liberty, as it relates to the one and the other, conſiſts in much the ſame degrees, and is to be attained by the ſame method; ſo that I might well enough diſmiſs this ſubject, and paſs on to mortal ſin. But reflecting on the nature of man, how prone we are to ſin, and yet how apt we are to think well of our ſelves, I judge it neceſſary to guard the doctrine of venial

ſin

ſin by ſome few rules, which may at once ſerve to ſecure our ſincerity, and point out the Perfection we are to aſpire to. *1ſt*, then, if we would prevent any fatal event of ſins flowing from *ignorance*, we muſt take care, that our ignorance it ſelf be not *criminal:* and that it will not be, if our hearts be ſincerely diſpoſed to do our duty, and if we uſe moral diligence to know it: if we be impartial, humble, and honeſt, and have that concern for the knowledge and practice of our duty, that is in ſome ſort proportionable to the importance of it. The ignorance that ariſes from natural incapacity, or want of ſufficient revelation, is *invincible*, and therefore *innocent*, John ix. 41. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin; but now ye ſay, we ſee; therefore your ſin remaineth:* and xv. 22. *If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloak for their ſins.* This rule muſt be underſtood of *neceſſary* knowledge in general; and more *legible* and *conſpicuous* lines of duty: both which notwithſtanding, there may be room for ſins of infirmity to enter, where mortal ones cannot; there may be imperfect diſpoſitions of mind and latent prejudices; there may be inſtances of duty of a ſlighter moment; there may be ſeveral circumſtances, and ſmall emergencies, that may either be without

the aim, or eſcape the diſcovery of a moral ſearch, that is, of a human one; which, though it be without *hypocriſy*, is not yet without more or leſs *frailty*. As to Perfection; it differs in this, as it does in other caſes, from ſincerity, only in the degrees by which it is advanced above it. He that will be perfect, muſt ſearch for wiſdom as for hid treaſures: his delight muſt be in the law of the Lord, and in his law muſt he meditate day and night: his thirſt of truth muſt be more eager and impatient, his diligence more wakeful, more circumſpect, more particular, more ſteady and conſtant, than that of the beginner, or of one who is no farther advanced, than ſuch meaſures of faith and love, as are indiſpenſably neceſſary to ſincerity, will carry him. *2dly*, Sins that are occaſioned by *ſurprize* and *inadvertency*, will not prove deſtructive, if the *inadvertency* itſelf be in a manner *innocent*: that is, firſt, there is no room for inadvertency in compleat acts of crying ſins. Secondly, there is no pretence for inadvertency, if we had any miſgivings within, or warnings without, concerning that particular ſin, into which we fell afterwards; much leſs if we cheriſh ill motions till they grow too ſtrong for us. And laſt of all, if we repeat the ſame ſin frequently and contemptuouſly. And to this I may add; he cannot be ſaid

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to ſin thro' ſurprize, who throws himſelf into the way of temptation, even though he be conſcious of his own infirmity. 3*dly*, As to thoſe moral defects which flow from *natural infirmity*; they will not deſtroy us if the infirmity it ſelf be pardonable. There are infirmities, which we acquire; infirmities, which grow ſtronger by indulgence; infirmities, which continue merely becauſe we do not take pains to ſubdue them: our moral defects muſt not flow from theſe kinds of infirmities; but from ſuch as, conſidering human nature, and the ſtate of this world, 'tis impoſſible utterly to root out. Theſe moral defects will do us no harm; if, firſt, we take care to ſettle in our minds the habits of thoſe virtues that are directly oppoſite to them. Secondly, If we watch and fight againſt our natural infirmities, and endeavour to reduce our appetites, even our natural appetites, within ſtrict and narrow bounds. Thirdly, If we waſh off the ſtains of our ſlips and defects by a general repentance: for upon the notion I have here given of venial ſin, repentance appears to be very neceſſary: for I require in them ſomething of voluntary, ſomething of freedom; enough to make an action ſinful, though not to prove the heart corrupt or wicked. And becauſe the degrees of voluntary and involuntary are not ſo eaſily diſtinguiſhable

from one another, 'tis plain our beſt ſecurity againſt any ill conſequences of our defects and frailties, is a godly ſorrow. And therefore I wonder not if *David* charge himſelf more ſeverely than God does, *My ſins are more in number than the hairs of my head.* *This* was a confeſſion that became the humility and ſolicitude of a penitent; that became the reflections of a wiſe and perfect man, and the corruption of human nature; the alloy of human performances; the ſlips and defects, the interruptions, neglect, and deviations of the beſt life.

CHAP. VI.

Of liberty, *as it imports freedom or deliverance from* mortal ſin. *What mortal ſin is. How the perfect man muſt be free from it. And which way this* liberty *may be beſt attained; with ſome rules for the attainment of it.*

HERE I will inquire into three things;

1. What mortal ſin is; or what kind of ſins they be, which are on all hands acknowledged to be inconſiſtent with a ſtate of grace and favour.

2. How

2. How far the perfect man muſt be ſet free or delivered from this kind of ſins; or how remote he is from the guilt of them.

3. Which way this liberty may be beſt attained.

§. 1. The firſt thing neceſſary is, to ſtate the notion of that ſin, which paſſes under the name of *mortal, wilful, preſumptuous,* or *deliberate* ſin: for theſe in writers are equivalent terms, and promiſcuouſly uſed to ſignify one and the ſame thing. *Sin* (ſaith St. *John*, 1 *Ep.* iii. 4.) *is the tranſgreſſion of the law.* This is a plain and full definition too of ſin: for the law of God is the rule of moral actions; 'tis the ſtandard and meaſure of right and wrong, of moral good and evil. Whatever is not within the compaſs of the law, is not within the compaſs of morality neither: Whatever cannot be comprehended within this definition, cannot have in it the entire and compleat notion of ſin; or, which is all one, it cannot be ſin, in a ſtrict, proper, and adequate ſenſe of the word. Hence St. *John* in the ſame verſe tells us, that *whoſoever ſinneth, tranſgreſſeth the law.* And St. *Paul*, Rom. iv. 15. *Where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion.* Sin then muſt always ſuppoſe a law; without which there

can be neither vice nor virtue, righteouſneſs nor wickedneſs: for theſe are nothing elſe but the violation or obſervation of the law of God; or habits and ſtates reſulting from the one or the other. But this is not all: two things more muſt be remarked, to render this definition, which the apoſtle gives us of ſin, clear and full. Firſt, The law muſt be *ſufficiently revealed.* Secondly, The tranſgreſſion of it muſt be truly *voluntary.*

1. By ſufficient revelation of a divine law, every one underſtands, that the law muſt be ſo publiſhed to the man who is to be governed by it, that the *authority* and *ſenſe* of it may be, if it be not his own fault, rendered evident to him. If the divine authority of any rule or precept be doubtful and uncertain, the obligation of it will be ſo too: and it is as neceſſary, that the ſenſe of the law ſhould be evident, as its authority. The law that is penned in dark and ambiguous terms, is, properly ſpeaking, no law at all; ſince the mind of the Lawgiver is not ſufficiently made known by it. Whatever is neceſſarily to be forborn or done by us, muſt be fully and clearly preſcribed in the law of God; and if it be not, it can never be neceſſary. Men thro' weakneſs or deſign may enact laws that are but a heap of letters,

letters, a croud of dubious *Delphick* ſentences: but God can never do ſo, becauſe this is repugnant both to his wiſdom and goodneſs, and to the very end of a law too, which is to be a rule, not a ſnare; 'tis *to give underſtanding to the ſimple*; to be *a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths*; not like an *Ignis fatuus*, to betray us into brakes and precipices, and ruin, and death.

2. The tranſgreſſion muſt be a *voluntary* one. And this imports two things: 1. A knowledge of the law. 2. Conſent to the breach of it. Firſt, As to the knowledge of the law. All that I have to ſay here in a few words, is, that ignorance of the law excuſes a tranſgreſſion, when it is itſelf excuſable; but if the ignorance itſelf be criminal, the effect of it muſt be ſo too. We muſt never think of excuſing our ſins, by alledging an ignorance, into which, not our own incapacity, or any other reaſonable cauſe, but neglect or contempt of the truth, or ſome other vicious luſt or paſſion, has betrayed us. Secondly, As to the conſent of the will; this is neceſſary to demonſtrate any action ſinful or virtuous; without this the mind will be no partner in the ſin, and by conſequence cannot be involved in the guilt of it. Whatever we cannot help, is our misfortune, not our fault; actions merely natural,

or

or merely forced, can neither be good nor evil. The concurrence of reaſon and choice is indiſpenſably neceſſary to the morality of an action. All this is plainly taught us by St. *James* i. 14, 15. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed. Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin; and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* Which words do certainly imply, that the ſpring and principle of ſin is within our ſelves; that 'tis our natural corruption that entices and allures us; and 'tis our conſent to its enticements that gives being to ſin, and defiles us with guilt.

From all this now put together, 'tis eaſy to conclude what ſort of a deſcription we are to form of *mortal ſin*: 'tis ſuch a tranſgreſſion of the law of God, as is *vicious* in its *original*, *deliberate* in its *commiſſion*, and *miſchievous* in its *tendencies* or *effects*: the heart is corrupted and miſled by ſome luſt or other, and ſo conſents to the breach of the moral law of God, a law of eternal and immutable goodneſs: or if the ſin conſiſts in the breach of any poſitive law, it muſt yet imply in it ſome moral obliquity in the will, or in the tendency of the action, or both. So that preſumptuous, or mortal ſin, call it by what name we will, is a *deliberate* tranſgreſſion of a *known* law of God, tending to the *diſhonour*

of

of *God*, the *injury* of our *neighbour*, or the *depravation* of our *nature*. Such are thoſe ſins which the prophet *Iſaiah* exhorts thoſe who will repent, to ceaſe from. And ſuch are thoſe we have a catalogue of, *Eph.* v. *Gal.* v. and elſewhere: *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like.* Theſe are the ſins, of which, as of ſo many members, the body of ſin conſiſts: theſe conſtitute the old man: theſe are ſometimes called, *the filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, ungodlineſs, wickedneſs, iniquity, the luſts of the fleſh, worldly luſts*, and ſuch like. Theſe and the like ſins have, as I ſaid, in them very apparent ſymptoms of malignity and mortality: they are always the effect of ſome carnal and worldly luſts, prevailing over the law of the mind; and they imply a contempt of God, injuſtice to our neighbour, and ſome kind of defilement and pollution of our nature. And that theſe are the plain indications of ſuch a guilt as excludes a man from heaven and the favour of God, is very plain from the account which the ſcripture gives us both of the origin and influence of ſin; from the care it takes to fortify the heart againſt all

infection; from the conſtant repreſentations it makes us of the ſhamefulneſs and the miſchief of ſin, even in reference to this world as well as the other. I cannot ſee any thing further neceſſary to the explication of deliberate or preſumptuous ſin, unleſs it be here fit to add, that it is mortal, though it proceed no further than the heart: there is no need at all that it ſhould be brought forth into action, to render it fatal and damnable. This is evident, not only from the nature of divine worſhip, which muſt be entire, ſincere, and ſpiritual; and therefore can no more be reconciled to the wickedneſs of our hearts, than of our actions; but alſo from the expreſs words of our Saviour, *Out of the heart proceed fornication, adultery, theft*, &c. And elſewhere he pronounces the adultery of the *heart damnable*, as well as that of the *body*, Mat. v. 28. *But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh upon a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.*

§. 2. I am next to give ſome account of the liberty of the perfect man, in reference to the ſin I have been diſcourſing of. I ſhall not need to ſtop at any general or preliminary obſervations; as, that abſtinence from ſin regards all the commandments of God alike; and to do otherwiſe,

were to mutilate and maim religion, and to dishonour God, while we pretend to worship and obey him: for the breach of any single commandment is a manifest violation of the majesty and authority of God, whatever observance we may pay all the rest: *For he that said, Do not commit adultery; said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law,* Jam. ii. 11. That the restraints man is to lay upon himself, relate no less to the *lusts* of the *soul* than the *actions* of the *body: Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven,* Matth. v. 10. That to begin well will avail us little, unless we finish well too. Universality, sincerity and perseverance are generally acknowledged to be essential and indispensable properties of saving, justifying faith. These things therefore being but just mentioned, I proceed to the point to be enquired into and resolved.

1. To be free from the *dominion* and *power* of mortal sin, is the first and lowest step; this is indispensable to sincerity, and absolutely necessary to salvation: *Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, to fulfil the lusts thereof,* Rom. vi. 12. And the advancing thus far does, I acknowledge, constitute man in a state of grace: for in

scripture

ſcripture men are denominated righteous or wicked, not from ſingle acts of vice or virtue, but from the prevalence and dominion, from the habit or cuſtom of the one or the other: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield your ſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs?* Rom. vi. 16. But then I muſt here add two remarks, by way of caution. 1. We muſt not preſume too ſoon of victory over an habitual ſin. An evil habit is not ſoon broken off; nor is it an eaſy matter to reſolve, when we have ſet our ſelves free from the power of it. Sometimes the temptation does not preſent itſelf as often as it was wont, or not with the ſame advantage; ſometimes one vice reſtrains us from another; ſometimes worldly conſiderations, or ſome little change in our temper, without any thorough change in our minds, put us out of humour for a little while with a darling ſin; and ſometimes the force and clearneſs of conviction produces ſome pious fits, which, though they do not utterly vanquiſh a luſt, do yet force it to give way, and retreat for a while, and *interrupt* that love which they do not *extinguiſh*: all this may be, and the work not yet be done, nor our liberty yet gained. If therefore we fall, though but now and then, and tho' at ſome diſtance of

of time, into the ſame ſin, we have great reaſon to be jealous of its power and our ſafety: nay, though we reſtrain ourſelves from the outward commiſſion of it; if yet we feel a ſtrong propenſion to it; we diſcern our ſelves ready to take fire on the appearance of a temptation; if we are fond of approaching as near as we can, and are pleaſed with thoſe indulgencies which are very near a-kin to it, we have reaſon to doubt that our conqueſt is not yet entire. Nay, the truth is, we cannot be on good grounds aſſured that we are maſters of our ſelves, till we have a ſettled averſion for the ſin which before we doated on, and ſhun the occaſions which before we courted, till we be poſſeſſed of a habit of that virtue which is a direct contradiction to it; and take as much pleaſure in the obedience, as ever we did in the tranſgreſſion of a divine command.

2*dly*, There are ſome ſins of that provoking nature, ſo criminal in their birth, and miſchievous in their conſequences, that one ſingle *act* or *commiſſion* of one of theſe is equivalent to a *habit* of others; ſuch is murther, idolatry, perjury, adultery; theſe cannot be committed without renouncing *humanity* as well as *Chriſtianity*; without reſiſting the inſtincts and impulſe of nature, as well as the light of the goſpel, and the

grace

grace of the Spirit. We must break thro' a great many difficulties and terrors, ere we can come at these sins; we must commit *many* other, in order to commit one of these; we must deliberate long, resolve desperately, and in defiance of God and conscience; and what is the *effect* of habit in other instances, is a necessary *preparative* in these, that is, *obduration*. In this case, therefore, the unhappy man, that has been guilty of any one of these, must not look upon himself as set free, when he is come to a resolution of never repeating it again; but then when he loaths and abhors himself in dust and ashes; when he has made the utmost reparations of the wrong he is capable of; when, if the interest of virtue require it, he is content to be oppressed with shame and sufferings; when, in one word, a long and constant course of mortification, prayers, tears and good works have washed off the stain and guilt.

2. We must be free, not only from a *habit*, but from single *acts* of deliberate presumptuous sin. The reason is plain; mortal sin cannot be committed without wounding the conscience, grieving the spirit, and renouncing our hopes in God through Christ for the time at least. *The wages of sin is death*, is true, not only of habits, but single acts of deliberate sin.

Death

Death is the penalty; the ſanction of every commandment; and the commandment does not prohibit habits only, but ſingle acts too. Nor is there indeed any room to doubt or diſpute here, but in one caſe; which is, if a righteous man ſhould be taken off in the very commiſſion of a ſin, which he has fallen into. Here, indeed, much may be ſaid, and with much uncertainty. But the reſolution of this point does not, as far as I can ſee, miniſter to any good or neceſſary end; and therefore I will leave it to God. In all other caſes, every thing is clear and plain; for if the ſervant of God fall into a preſumptuous ſin, 'tis univerſally acknowledged, that he cannot recover his ſtation but by repentance. If he repent preſently, he is ſafe; but if he continue in his ſin, if he repeat it, he paſſes into a ſtate of wickedneſs, widens the breach between God and his ſoul, declines inſenſibly into a habit of ſin, and renders his wound more and more incurable. 'Tis to little purpoſe, I think, here to conſider the vaſt difference there is in the commiſſion, even of the ſame ſin, between a child of God, and a child of wrath; becauſe a child of God muſt not commit it at all: if he do, tho' it be with reluctancy; tho' it be, as it were, with an imperfect conſent, and with a divided ſoul; tho' the awe of religion and conſcience ſeems not utterly to

have forſaken him, even in the midſt of his ſin; tho' his heart ſmite him the very minute it is finiſhed, and repentance and remorſe take off the reliſh of the unhappy draught; yet ſtill 'tis ſin; 'tis in its nature damnable; and nothing but the blood of Jeſus can purge the guilt.

3. The perfect man may be ſuppoſed, not only actually to abſtain from mortal ſin, but to be advanced ſo far in the mortification of all his inordinate affections, as to do it with *eaſe* and *pleaſure*, with *conſtancy* and *delight*. For it muſt reaſonably be preſumed, that his victory over ungodly and worldly luſts, is more confirmed and abſolute; his abhorrence of them, more deep and ſenſible, more fixt and laſting, than that of a beginner or babe in Chriſt. The regenerate firſt fears the conſequence of ſin; but by degrees he hates the ſin itſelf. The purity of his ſoul renders him now incapable of finding any pleaſure in what he doated on before; and the love of God and virtue raiſeth him above the temptations which he was wont to fall by: *Old things are paſt away, and all things are become new.*

4. Laſtly, The perfect man's abſtinence is not only more *eaſy* and *ſteady*, but more *entire* and *compleat* alſo than that of others: he has a regard to the end and deſign of the law; to the perfection of his nature;

to

to the purity and elevation of his ſoul; and therefore he expounds the prohibitions of the law in the moſt enlarged ſenſe, and interprets them by a ſpirit of faith and love. He is not content to refrain from actions directly criminal, but ſhuns every appearance of evil; and labours to mortify all the diſpoſitions and tendencies of his nature towards it; and to decline whatever circumſtances of life are apt to betray the ſoul into a love of this world, or the body: he has crucified the world, and the body too. That pleaſure, that honour, that power, that profit, which captivates the ſinner, tempts, and tries, and diſquiets the novice, is but a burthen, a trouble to him: he finds no guſt, no reliſh in theſe things. He is ſo far from intemperance, ſo far from wantonneſs, ſo far from pride and vanity, that could he without any diſadvantage to the intereſt of religion, he would imitate the meanneſs, the plainneſs, the laborioufneſs, the ſelf-denial of our Saviour's life; not only in the diſpoſition and affection of his ſoul, but even in his outward ſtate and deportment; and would prefer it far above the pomp and ſhew of life. In one word, he inquires not how far he may *enjoy* and be *ſafe*, but how far he may *deny* himſelf and be *wiſe*: he is ſo far from deſiring forbidden ſatisfactions, that he is unwilling

and afraid to find too much ſatisfaction in the natural and neceſſary actions of an animal life. I need not prove this to any one, who has read the foregoing chapters: for it is what I have been doing throughout this treatiſe. It is nothing, but what is conſonant to the whole tenour of the ſcripture; and to the example of the beſt times. And 'tis conformable to what the beſt authors have writ, who have any thing of life and ſpirit in their works; or have any true notion of the great deſign of the Chriſtian religion, which is an heavenly converſation. Let any one but caſt his eyes on St. *Baſil*, or any other after him, who aimed at the ſame thing I now do, the promoting holineſs in the world in the beauty and perfection of it; and he will acknowledge, that I am far from having carried this matter too high. I will quote but one or two paſſages of St. *Baſil*; (*) his deſcription of the perfect man with regard to his ſelf-denial runs thus. He is one that conſults the *neceſſities*, not the *pleaſure* of his nature; and ſeems to grudge the time which he beſtows on the ſupport and nouriſhment of a corruptible body. He is ſo far from looking upon eating and drinking, *&c.* as an enjoyment, that he

* Μόλις καὶ καλὰ μικρὸν τῶν ἀναλισκομένων ἀπλόμενον. Καὶ ὡς λειτουργίαν ἐπαχθῆ ὑποτελοῦντα τῇ φύσει, καὶ δυσχεραίνοντα μὲν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς περὶ ταῦτα διατρίβης. Ὅροι κατὰ Πλάτος. p. 454.

rather

rather accounts it a taſk or troubleſome ſervice which the frailty of his nature demands at his hands. Nor was this great man more ſevere againſt the luſts of the fleſh than againſt thoſe other branches of the love of the world, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life. (†) All vanity and affectation of praiſe and reſpect; all the oſtentation *(ſaith he)* and ſhew of life, is utterly unlawful for a Chriſtian. And all this is directly conſonant to his gloſs (‡) on thoſe words of St. *Paul*, *They that uſe the world as not abuſing it.* Whatever is beyond *uſe* is *abuſe*; directly conſonant to his definition of temperance: (§) That it is the extirpation of ſin; the extermination of unruly paſſions, and the mortification of the body, extending even to the *natural* appetites and affections of it.

I know not what ſcruples or miſtakes the doctrine I here advance concerning this part of my perfect man's liberty, may be encountred with: but I am confident, I have given no juſt occaſion for any. I do not ſay of the perfect, with *Jovinian*, that they cannot fall; but I ſay, that they may, and ought to ſtand; and if it be

† Ἡ κενοδοξία, καὶ ἡ ἀνθρωπαρέσκια, καὶ τὸ πρὸς ἐπίδειξιν τι ποιεῖν, ὅλως ἐπὶ παντὶ πράγματι Χριστιανοῖς ἀπηγόρευται. p. 456.

‡ Παραχρῆσις δὲ ἐστιν ἡ ὑπὲρ τὴν χρείαν δαπάνη. p. 457.

§ Ἐστιν ἐν ἡ Ἐγκράτεια, ἁμαρτίας, ἀναιρεσις, παθῶν ἀπαλλοτρίωσις, σώματος νέκρωσις, μέχρι καὶ αὐτῶν φυσικῶν παθημάτων τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν. p. 445.

not their own fault, will do so. I do not affirm of them, as the hereticks in *Vincentius Lyrinensis* did of their party, that they are privileged from sin by a peculiar grace and transcendent favour; but I affirm, that they shall not want grace to preserve them from it, unless they be wanting to themselves. I do not go about to maintain, that God sees no sin in his children; but I maintain, that mortal sin is not the sport of his children. But do not I in this fall in with the *Papists*, who assert the possibility of keeping the commands of God? I answer, that taking them in the sense, in which they themselves in the conference at *Ratisbonne* defend this doctrine, I do. They there tell us, that, when they talk thus, they take the law or commands of God, not in a strict and rigid, but in a favourable and equitable, *i. e.* a gospel construction: and this is so far from being heterodox, that *Davenant* accounts it a plain giving up the question in controversy. But am I not run into the error of the *Pelagians* and *Quakers?* I answer, if the one or the other assert, that the perfect man passes thorough the whole course of life without falling into any sin; or, that in the best part of life, he is impeccable, and not subject to sin (as in the heat of disputation their adversaries seem sometimes to fasten on them) I am at a wide distance from

from them. But if they teach, that the perfect man has grace and ſtrength enough to forbear wilful ſin, and that many actually do ſo, I am, I muſt confeſs, exactly of their mind. But then I am, at the ſame time, of the ſame mind with St. *Auſtin* and St. *Jerome* too; for they teach the very ſame doctrine: for they never contended about the poſſibility of freedom or deliverance from *mortal* ſin, but only from *venial*. St. *Jerome* * ſhall explain his own ſenſe, *Etenim abſque vitio, quod græce dicitur* Κακία, *hominem poſſe eſſe aio:* Ἀναμάρτητοι, *id eſt, ſine Peccato, eſſe nego.* Which is the ſame thing that St. *Auſtin* commonly admits; that man may be *ſine Crimine*, but not *ſine Peccato*; without mortal, but not without venial ſin. And in this, they are certainly of the mind of the ſcripture; which every-where repreſents the perfect man, as holy, blameleſs, undefiled, without ſpot, walking with God: and, in one word, as free from ſin. If any man can reconcile theſe texts, which are very numerous, with mortal ſin, I will not ſay in the beſt ſtate of the beſt men, but a ſtate of ſincerity and regeneration, I will acknowledge my miſtake. But till then I cannot but think the doctrine I advance neceſſary to eſtabliſh the true notion of holineſs, and convince us of our obligation

* *Dial. Secund. ad Pelag.* p. 189.

to it. This doctrine is again neceſſary to wipe off thoſe aſperſions and calumnies the *Quakers* caſt upon our Church; as if it held, that the regenerate themſelves may continue in their ſins; nay, cannot be freed from them. Our Church teaches indeed (*Artic.* 4.) that the moſt perfect men are never utterly exempt from defects, failings, and human infirmities; and I believe they themſelves are not confident enough to teach otherwiſe: only they will not call theſe infirmities ſins: and then the whole controverſy is reduced to this; we agree in the thing, but differ in the name: and in this difference, we are not only on the humbler, but the ſafer ſide too: for acknowledging them ſins, we ſhall be the better diſpoſed ſure, to be ſorry for them, to beg pardon for them, and watch againſt them.

The fruit of this liberty has been ſufficiently accounted for in *chap.* 3. And therefore I proceed,

§. 3. To propoſe ſome rules for the attainment of it.

1. The mind muſt be grounded and rooted in the faith; it muſt be thoroughly convinced and perſuaded of theſe great articles of the Chriſtian religion, That there is a God, and ſuch a God, a holy, juſt, omniſcient,

omniſcient, and omnipotent one; the incarnation, ſuffering and glory of the bleſſed Jeſus; a judgment to come, and the eternal rewards and puniſhments of another life. The firm belief of theſe things does naturally promote theſe two effects.

1. It will awaken a ſinner out of his lethargy and ſecurity; it will diſturb him in his ſinful enjoyments, and fill his mind with guilty fears, and uneaſy reflections. And when the man finds no reſt, no ſecurity in his ſins, this will naturally oblige him to endeavour the conqueſt of them. But then we muſt not ſtifle and ſuppreſs theſe thoughts; we muſt give conſcience full liberty; we muſt hear the dictates of our own minds patiently; and conſider ſeriouſly thoſe terrible truths, which they lay before us; till we go from this exerciſe deeply impreſſed with ſuch notions as theſe: that our ſins, ſooner or later, will certainly bring upon us temporal and eternal miſery: that nothing but ſincere righteouſneſs can produce true and laſting happineſs: that it is a dreadful danger to dally too long with indignation, or preſume too far on the mercy of a juſt, and holy, and almighty God: that the neglecting the great ſalvation, tendered by the goſpel, and procured by the bleſſed Jeſus; the ſlighting the blood of the covenant, and grieving the Holy Spirit (all which we do by wilful ſin)

is

is a guilt, that will ſink down the obſtinate ſinner into the loweſt hell; and render his condition more intolerable than that of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*.

2. The ſecond effect of the firm belief of theſe goſpel truths, is, that it begets in us a contempt of this world, and all the things of it. To him that believes, how ſhort is time compared to eternity? how falſe, how empty are the pleaſures of ſin, compared with thoſe of heaven? how inſignificant the eſteem or love of man to that of God? how worthleſs are all our worldly hopes and pretenſions in reſpect of an intereſt in Jeſus? Now the ſoul, that is once thoroughly poſſeſſed with theſe notions, what will it not do, what will it not ſuffer, rather than fall ſhort of, or forfeit its crown? In what ſtate will it not be contented; nay, in what ſtate will it not abound in joy, whilſt it holds faſt the ſtedfaſtneſs of its hope, and is ſecure of the love of Jeſus? Here begins that purity of heart, which is the fountain of true Epicuriſm: that greatneſs of mind, which alone is true honour and fortitude. But, that faith may have theſe effects upon us, it muſt not be only a *true*, but a *lively* faith: therefore my

2. Second Rule, or, if you pleaſe, another branch of the former rule, ſhall be this. They that will be free indeed, muſt

not only believe the great truths of the gospel, but must frequently and seriously ponder them, till they have imprinted in themselves as clear, distinct and perfect *ideas* of them as we are capable of. This will soon mortify the appetites of the body, correct our false opinions of worldly things, and baffle all the sophistry and confidence of lust. A lively faith, is a faith that imports the most clear and natural, the most full and enlarged notions of its objects; a faith, that not only looks upon the articles of our creed as true, but beholds them in a manner as present; and so represented and drawn to the life, that they fill the soul with great and moving considerations. This faith does not only believe that there is a God; but it beholds him, and walks before him as present; it sees him arrayed in all his glory, and in all his majesty. in all the power, and all the terrors, in all the beauties, and all the graces of the divine Nature: it does not only believe, that there are rewards and punishments; but is extremely sensible of the terrors of the one, and attractions of the other; and it looks upon both as at the door. It does not only acknowledge a Mediator, but takes a full view of the misery of that state, wherein we lay through sin; and of the blessedness of that, into which we are translated by the redemption, which is in *Jesus*. It con-

contemplates this Mediator in all the ſeveral ſteps of condeſcenſion and humiliation; in all the tenderneſs and tranſports of his paſſion; in all the melancholy ſcenes of his ſufferings, and the bright and chearful ones of his glory. This is the faith that ſets us free.

3. We muſt not ſtop in faith, till it be made perfect in love. We muſt meditate divine truths till they have fired our ſouls; till they have enkindled our affections; till we be poſſeſſed by an ardent love of God, of *Jeſus*, of righteouſneſs, and of heaven; till all our other deſires and paſſions be converted into, and ſwallowed up of love; till God becomes the centre of our ſouls; and in him we reſt, in him we glory, and in him we rejoice. O love! how great and glorious are the things that are ſaid of thee! 'tis thou who doſt impregnate and animate faith itſelf: 'tis thou, who doſt ſurmount the difficulties of duty, and make the yoke of Chriſt eaſy, and his burthen light: 'tis thou, who doſt caſt out fear, and make religion full of pleaſure: 'tis thou that doſt make us watchful againſt temptations, and impatient under the interruptions of duty: 'tis thou, that doſt make us diſreliſh the pleaſures of this world, and long to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt. Here is the liberty of the ſons of God.

Bleſſed

Bleſſed are they, even in this world, who attain it. But one caution I muſt here add, that our love muſt not be a *flaſh*, a *fit*; but a ſteddy and well-ſettled affection; an affection that has the *warmth* of *paſſion*, and the *firmneſs* of *habit*. We muſt therefore, by repeated meditations and prayers, daily nouriſh this flame of the altar, and not ſuffer it to go out.

4. We muſt never be at reſt, till we have poſſeſſed our minds with a perfect *hatred* of the ſin which we are moſt ſubject to. The love of God, his long-ſuffering and forbearance, the ſufferings of Jeſus, the ſtrugglings of the ſpirit, the peace and pleaſure of holineſs, the guilt and vexation, the ſhame and puniſhment of ſin, its ill influence on our preſent perfection and happineſs, on our peace and hopes, are proper topicks to effect this. A thorough hatred of ſin, once ſettled and rooted in us, will produce that ſorrow, that indignation, that watchfulneſs, that zeal, which will remove us far enough, not only from the ſin, but alſo from the ordinary temptations to it; and place us almoſt without the danger of a relapſe.

To this fourth rule, I ſhould add this other: that when once a man has reſolved upon a new courſe of life, whatever difficulties he finds in his way, whatever baffles he meets with, he muſt never quit the deſign

ſign of virtue and life; he muſt never give over fighting till he conquer: the reaſon is plain, for he muſt either *conquer* or *die*. But this belonging rather to perſeverance in virtue, than the beginning of it, therefore I but juſt mention it.

5. It will not be imprudent in this moral, as in phyſical cures, to obſerve diligently, and follow the motions and tendencies of nature. Where there are ſeeds of generoſity and honour; the turpitude and ſhame of ſin, the baſeneſs and ingratitude of it, the love of God, and of Jeſus, and ſuch like, are fit topicks to dwell upon. Where fear is more apt to prevail, there the terrors of the Lord are the moſt powerful motives: and ſo whatever the frame and conſtitution of nature be, it will not be difficult to find arguments in the goſpel adapted to it, which will be ſo much the more *prevalent*, as they are the more *natural*.

6. *Laſtly*, We muſt uſe all means to obtain the ſpirit of God, and to increaſe and cheriſh his influence: we muſt aſk, and ſeek, and knock, *i. e.* we muſt pray and meditate, and travel with patience, and with importunity, that our heavenly Father may give us his Holy Spirit: and when we have it, we muſt not grieve it by any deliberate ſin, nor quench it by ſecurity or negligence, by ſenſual freedoms and

and preſumption; but we muſt cheriſh every motion, improve every deſire and paſſion that it works in us; we muſt ſhun every appearance of evil; we muſt preſs on towards perfection; we muſt watch unto prayer; we muſt ſpend the time of our ſojourning here in fear; we muſt rejoice and glory in the Lord; and we muſt wait for the bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Chriſt Jeſus. And now I have finiſhed what I had to ſay on this ſubject of the perfect man's liberty, as it relates to mortal or wilful ſin. I have ſhewed what this ſin is; and how far man may be freed from it, referring the reader to *chap.* 4. for the fruit of this freedom. I have here, laſtly, given that advice which I thought moſt ſerviceable to the attainment of it. And through this whole chapter, I have had regard not only to perfection, but ſincerity; it being indeed improper to do otherwiſe, ſince we cannot arrive at the one, but through the other. For ſincerity is Perfection in its infancy or non-age! and Perfection is nothing elſe but ſincerity cultivated by meditation and diſcipline, and cheriſhed by the influence of heaven. And now let no man's heart fail him, while he contemplates the difficulties which block up the way to his liberty. The way indeed is ſteep, and the top is high; but

ſerenity

ſerenity and happineſs, ſecurity and glory dwell there. Many indeed are the temptations which would forbid our aſcent, and thruſt us down; but we are armed all over; they cannot hurt us; the Spirit ſupports and encourages us; and nothing but our cowardiſe and inconſtancy can prevent our ſucceſs: *Watch ye, ſtand faſt, quit ye like men, be ſtrong*; and then you ſhall be ſure to conquer and enter into reſt.

CHAP. VII.

Of unfruitfulneſs, *as it conſiſts in* idleneſs. Idleneſs, *either habitual or accidental. Conſiderations to deter men from the ſin of* idleneſs.

UNfruitfulneſs is a fit ſubject to conclude a diſcourſe of *liberty* with, or begin one of *zeal*; for lying, like a tract of ground, between two bordering kingdoms, it may indifferently be laid to either. As it implies a direct oppoſition to ſpiritual life and ſincerity, it naturally falls in under the conſideration of zeal: as it implies a ſervile ſubjection to ſome vile luſt or other, it naturally falls in under the conſideration of liberty: ſo that by allotting it this place, I ſhall at once compleat my reflections on the argument of liberty.

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Barrenneſs, or unfruitfulneſs, may in general beſt be underſtood by comparing it with a ſtate of *wickedneſs:* from which, as it is uſually diſtinguiſhed in the notion of the vulgar, ſo does it really differ on many accounts. The one has in it an air of *defiance*, the other of *unconcernment* for religion: the one *forgets* God, the other *contemns* him; the one has no *reliſh* nor *favour* of that which is *good*, the other finds too much *guſt* and *pleaſure* in that which is *evil*; the one makes us by degrees *enemies*, the other *ſtrangers* to God. In ſhort, there is little doubt to be made, but that the *omiſſion* of a *duty*, and the *commiſſion* of a *crime*; *lukewarmneſs* in that which is *good*, and *eagerneſs* and *confidence* in that which is *evil*, may, and generally do, differ very widely in the degrees of guilt: from hence it is (the ſinner being always a partial and indulgent judge of himſelf) that it is not unuſual for many, who ſeem to have ſome abhorrence of wickedneſs, to be far enough from apprehending much evil, or much danger in unfruitfulneſs. This is a fatal error; it fruſtrates the great deſign of religion, and robs it of its trueſt honour, good works. For what can religion effect by that man, who retains nothing of it but the bare form and profeſſion, and dares promiſe

himſelf not only impunity, but a heaven, in an uſeleſs and unprofitable life?

Unfruitfulneſs, if more particularly enquired into, conſiſts in two things; a *neglect* of *duty*; or a *lifeleſs* and *unprofitable* performance of it. The former I will call *idleneſs*; the latter *lukewarmneſs*, *coldneſs*, *formality*; and treat of each in order; of the former in this, and of the latter in the following chapter. And becauſe each of them are encumbered with miſtakes and errors, which ariſe not only from ſelf-love and partiality, but alſo from ſhallowneſs of judgment, joined with tenderneſs of conſcience; I ſhall endeavour ſo to manage this ſubject, as neither to diſcourage the weak, nor embolden the careleſs.

§. 1. Of idleneſs. The omiſſion of a duty may be either *habitual*, or *occaſional* and *accidental*: and accordingly the caſe of omiſſion may be very different.

1. An *habitual omiſſion* of duty cannot conſiſt with ſincerity: a general neglect of duty defeats the main end of religion, which is to honour God, adorn our holy profeſſion, and promote the good of human ſociety; all which can never be attained but by following after righteouſneſs, and abounding in the fruits of it. By this rule,

rule, an *idle*, though *innocent* life, muſt neceſſarily be accounted *irreligious* and *vicious*, being a flat contradiction to our excellent profeſſion. He who does not pray, nor meditate, nor purſue any end of charity, though he be otherwiſe civil and regular in his life; yet becauſe he does not work righteouſneſs, becauſe he is ſo far from imitating the zeal and charity of the bleſſed Jeſus, that he acts directly repugnant to both; therefore muſt he not be looked upon as a diſciple of Jeſus, but as an alien and a ſtranger. He, whoſe life is ſpent in *vanity* or *drudgery*, in pleaſure or buſineſs, though his pleaſure be not *impure*, nor his buſineſs *unjuſt*; yet is he, before God, a criminal, becauſe unprofitable; he has received the grace of God in vain; the light of the goſpel has riſen upon him in vain: and he has ſerved no intereſt of virtue or religion in his generation; and therefore he will be excluded heaven, with the *ſlothful ſervant, who hid his Maſter's talent in a napkin*, Luke xix. 20.

2. The caſe of an *accidental* or *occaſional* omiſſion of duty, is very different from that of *habitual* neglect of it; an *occaſional omiſſion* may be, not only *lawful*, but *neceſſary*; but the *neglect* of duty never can be either. The circumſtances of poſitive duty,

and the meaſures and degrees of moral good, are not ſtrictly fixed and ſettled; and therefore a ſingle omiſſion, either in the one or the other, where-ever there is a ſufficient reaſon for it, can neither grieve the ſpirit, nor fruſtrate the deſign of religion; nor conſequently imply any corruption in the heart. But then we muſt take care,

1. That our omiſſion be not too frequent. We muſt always have regard, in this matter of duty, to the great end and deſigns of its injunction; we muſt take care that our omiſſions in moral duties be not ſo often, that either the honour of our religion, or the welfare of our neighbour, ſuffer by it. Nor muſt we ſo often omit inſtrumental duties, prayers, reading, the ſacrament, and the like, as thereby to *abate*, or much leſs *extinguiſh*, our ſpiritual guſt and fervour. Omiſſions of duty too often repeated, breed a kind of indifference; or lukewarmneſs; and lukewarmneſs ſoon paſſes into coldneſs and inſenſibleneſs; and this often ends in a reprobate mind, and an utter averſion for religion.

2*dly*, We muſt endeavour ſome way or other to compenſate the omiſſion of a duty; to make up by charity, what we have defalked from devotion; or to ſupply by ſhort ejaculations, what we have been forced

to

to retrench from fixed and regular offices of prayer. And he that watches for opportunities, either of *improvement*, or *doing good*, will, I believe, never have reaſon to complain of the want of them: God will put into his hands either the one or the other; and for the choice, he cannot do better than follow God's.

3*dly*, A ſingle omiſſion muſt never proceed from a *ſinful motive*; from a love of the world or indulgence to the body; *neceſſity* or *charity* is the only juſt and proper apology for it. *Inſtrumental* or poſitive duties may give way to *moral* ones; the religion of the *means*, to the religion of the *end*; and in moral duties, the leſs may give way to the greater. But *duty* muſt never give way to *ſin*, nor *religion* to *intereſt* or *pleaſure*.

Having thus briefly given an account, what omiſſion of duty is, and what is not ſinful; and conſequently ſo ſettled the notion of idleneſs, that neither the careleſs nor the ſcrupulous can eaſily miſtake their caſe; I will now propoſe ſuch *conſiderations* as I judge moſt likely to deter men from it, and ſuch *advice* as may be the beſt guard and preſervative againſt it.

1. The firſt thing I would have every one lay to heart is, that a ſtate of idleneſs is a ſtate of damnable ſin. Idleneſs is directly repugnant to the great ends of God,

both in our creation and redemption. As to our *creation*; can we imagine that God, who created not any thing but for ſome excellent end, ſhould create man for none, or for a ſilly one? The ſpirit within us is an active and vivacious principle; our rational faculties capacitate and qualify us for doing good; this is the proper work of reaſon, the trueſt and moſt natural pleaſure of a rational ſoul. Who can think now, that our wiſe Creator lighted this candle within us, that we might oppreſs and ſtifle it by negligence and idleneſs? that he contrived and deſtined ſuch a mind to ſquander and fool away its talents in vanity and impertinence? As to our *redemption*, 'tis evident both what the deſign of it is, and how oppoſite idleneſs is to it. Chriſt gave himſelf for us, *to redeem us from all iniquity*; *and to purify to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. And this is what our regeneration or ſanctification aims at: *We are God's workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them*, Epheſ. ii. 10. How little then can a uſeleſs and barren life anſwer the expectations of God? What a miſerable return muſt it be to the blood of his Son; and how utterly muſt it diſappoint all the purpoſes of his Word and Spirit? But what need I argue further? the

the truth I contend for is the expreſs and conſtant doctrine of the ſcriptures: is not *idleneſs* and *fulneſs of bread* reckoned amongſt the ſins of *Sodom?* What means the ſentence againſt the *barren fig-tree*, *Luke* xiii. 7. but the deſtruction and damnation of the idle and the ſluggiſh? The indignation of God is not enkindled againſt the barrenneſs of *trees*, but *men*. What can be plainer than the condemnation of the unprofitable ſervant, who periſhed becauſe he had not improv'd his talent? *Mat.* xxv. 38. And how frequently does the apoſtle declare himſelf againſt the *idle* and *diſorderly?* And all this proceeds upon plain and neceſſary grounds: our Lord was an example of virtue, as well as innocence; and he did not only refrain from *doing evil*, but he *went about doing good*. We can never ſatisfy the intention of divine precepts by *negative* righteouſneſs: when God prohibits the *filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit*, he enjoins *the perfecting holineſs in his fear:* when he forbids us *to do evil*, he at the ſame time preſcribes *the learning to do well*. What need I multiply more words? Idleneſs is a flat contradiction to faith, hope, charity; to fear, vigilance, mortification; and therefore certainly muſt be a damning ſin: *Theſe* are all active and vigorous principles; but idleneſs enfeebles and diſ-ſpirits, manacles and fetters us.

Theſe are pure, ſtrict and ſelf-denying principles; but idleneſs is ſoft and indulgent: *theſe* conquer the world and the body, raiſe and exalt the mind; but idleneſs is far from enterprizing any thing, from attempting any thing that is good; it pampers the body, and effeminates and diſſolves the mind; and finally, whatever innocence or inoffenſiveneſs it may pretend to, it does not only terminate in ſin, but has its beginning from it; from ſtupidity and ignorance, from vanity and levity, from ſoftneſs and ſenſuality, from ſome prevailing luſt or other.

2. Next after the *nature*, the *conſequences* of idleneſs are to be conſidered; and if it be taken in the utmoſt latitude, there is ſcarce any ſin which is more juſtly liable to ſo many tragical accuſations; for it is the parent of *diſhonour* and *poverty*, and of moſt of the *ſins* and *calamities* of this mortal life. But at preſent I view it only as it is drawn with half a face, and that the much leſs deformed of the two: I conſider it here as pretending to *innocence*, and flattering itſelf with the hopes of happineſs; and yet even thus, ſuppoſing it as harmleſs and inoffenſive as it can be, yet ſtill theſe will be miſerable effects of it: it will rob religion, and the world, of the ſervice due to both: it will bereave us of the pleaſure of life, and the comfort of death;

death; and ſend us down at laſt to a curſed eternity. For where are the virtues that ſhould maintain the order and beauty of human ſociety; that ſhould relieve and redreſs the miſeries of the world? Where are the virtues that ſhould vindicate the honour of religion, and demonſtrate its divinity as effectually as predictions or miracles can do? Where are the bright examples that ſhould convert the unbelieving part of mankind, and inflame the believing part with a generous emulation? Certainly the lazy Chriſtian, the ſlothful ſervant, can pretend to nothing of this kind. As to the *pleaſure* of life, if true and laſting, if pure and ſpiritual, 'tis eaſy to diſcern from what fountains it muſt be drawn. Nothing but poverty of ſpirit can procure our peace, nothing but purity of heart our pleaſure. But ah! how far are the idle and unactive from theſe virtues? Faith, love, and hope, are the ſeeds of them: victories and triumphs, devotion, alms, and good works are the fruits of them: but what a ſtranger to theſe is the drone and ſluggard? Then for the *comfort of death*, it muſt proceed from a well-ſpent life: he that ſees nothing but a vaſt ſolitude and wilderneſs behind him, will never, like the *Iſraelites*, ſee a *Canaan* before him. Life muſt be filled with good works, or elſe death will look but

dark

dark and gloomy: when the conſcience inquires every where after the effects of the Word, and the Spirit, and the blood of Jeſus, and can diſcover in all the parts, in all the paths of life, no tracks of any thing but *fancy* and *fortune*, *humour* and *indulgence*; how will it ſhrink, and faint, and tremble! what penſive, melancholy doubts will damp and choak its hope! and how can it be otherwiſe? Alas! the mind of a Chriſtian is ſufficiently informed that every man ſhall receive according to what he has done in the body; God will judge every man according to his works; what then muſt become of him who has none to ſhew? If immortality and glory, if life and peace be the reward of *well-doing*; nay, of *patient continuance* in well-doing, what will become of the drowſy, the ſupine, and careleſs, the ſot and the ſluggiſh, who have ſlept and fooled, and trifled away life?

3. I might aggravate the guilt of idleneſs, by taking an eſtimate of the *talents* it waſtes, the obligations it ſlights, and the *hopes* it forfeits. I might render man more jealous and apprehenſive of falling into it, by obſerving how generally it prevails; which is a plain proof, either of the ſtrength of the temptation, or of our propenſion; a plain proof either that there is I know not what ſecret magick in the ſin, or elſe that

that the cheat it impoſes upon the world is a very clever, a very dextrous one. But I have ſaid enough; and where the former conſiderations fail, theſe will hardly ſucceed: therefore I will now paſs on from arguments to advice, which was the next thing propoſed to be done.

And here my advice muſt have regard to two different ſorts of perſons. 1. To ſuch as are born to plentiful or competent fortunes. 2. To ſuch as are to raiſe their own, or to provide for the ſupport and maintenance of themſelves and their families, by their labour and induſtry in ſome calling or profeſſion. To the former the beſt directions I can give, are theſe:

1. He that is maſter of his time, ought to devote the more to religion: *To whom God hath given much, of him much will be required:* Nor has ſuch an one any excuſe left, either for omiſſion, or a haſty and curſory performance of duty, but one, one that will encreaſe his guilt, *i. e.* lazineſs, pleaſure, or ſome ſin or other. Such an one therefore ought to be conſtant and diligent in frequenting the publick aſſemblies of the church; his attendance upon prayers, ſacraments, ſermons, muſt be ſuch as becomes a man, who, as it has pleaſed God, ſeems born not to provide for life, but only to live, only to improve and enjoy life, and carry on the noble deſign of it; and as

becomes a man whoſe good or ill example is of ſuch vaſt importance to the ſervice or diſſervice of religion. Nor muſt ſuch an one's attendance on the publick excuſe him from the religious offices of the cloſet, or his family; he ought to abound in each: he may be more frequent in meditation and prayer, in reading and inſtruction, and perform each with more juſtneſs and ſolemnity than others can.

2. Perſons of fortune ought to be careful in the choice of intimates and friends. Converſation is not always a loſs, but ſometimes a gain of time: we often need to have our forgetfulneſs relieved, our drowſineſs awakened by the diſcourſes and reflections of our friends. If diſcourſe were generally ſeaſoned with grace, converſation would be the greateſt bleſſing; if with ſenſe and reaſon, innocence and prudence, it would be the moſt agreeable entertainment of human life. But how miſchievous is the acquaintance which infects us with vanity and lightneſs of ſpirit, which ſhews us nothing but a gaudy outſide and a frothy ſoul! whoſe example binds men in civility to be fooliſh, and makes confidence, and vice, and mis-ſpence of time, a faſhion.

3. It were to be wiſhed, that perſons of the beſt rank, were ever bred up to ſomething; to ſomething that might improve, to ſomething that might amuſe and inno-

cently engage their minds; to ſomething that might employ life, without incumbring it. And yet, alas! what need I wiſh this? How many excellent qualities are neceſſary to render a gentleman worthy of the ſtation where God has placed him? Let him purſue *theſe*. How many are the virtues, how many the duties to which a Chriſtian is obliged? Let him attend *theſe*. There is a great deal requiſite to make a good maſter, a good huſband, a good father, a good ſon, a good neighbour, a good pariſhioner, an excellent ſubject, and an excellent friend; and yet there are many other relations beſides theſe. In a word, there is no man, who, when he ſhall appear before God, will not be found to have omitted many duties; and to have performed many other with leſs care and diligence than he ought: and ſurely ſuch a one cannot juſtly complain for want of buſineſs. I doubt rather on the contrary, that whoever takes a juſt and full view of things, will have reaſon to complain, that life is ſhort, and our work great; that let us uſe all the diligence we can, and be as frugal of our time as we will, we arrive much ſooner at a maturity of years, of knowledge and virtue.

4. The diverſions of perſons of this quality ought to be well regulated; ſuch as become the character of a *gentleman*, and the dignity of a *Chriſtian*; that is, they muſt

muſt be neither *mean* nor *vicious*. But I have treated this and the foregoing heads more copiouſly in *human life*; to which I refer my reader.

As to ſuch, in the next place, who are engaged in a profeſſion, I have particularly conſidered their ſtate in ſeveral places, and find little to add here, but only to remind them, that they may be guilty of idleneſs too, that their idleneſs is the more criminal, the leſs temptation they have to it. They may neglect the duties of their calling, I mean their ſecular calling; and if they be unfaithful and negligent in their temporal concern, it is not to be expected that they ſhould be more ſolicitous and induſtrious about their ſpiritual one. They may again ſuffer the cares of this life to thruſt out thoſe of another; and then they are truly idle and ſlothful ſervants to God, how induſtrious and faithful ſoever they are to the world: for life is but waſted and miſ-ſpent, if it makes not proviſion for *eternity*; and it matters little whether it be waſted in *pleaſure* or in *drudgery*.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Unfruitfulneſs, *as it conſiſts in* Lukewarmneſs *or* formality. *The cauſes from which Lukewarmneſs proceeds. The folly, guilt, and danger of a* Laodicean *ſtate.*

IN the former chapter I conſidered that part of Unfruitfulneſs which conſiſts in the *omiſſion* of duty: I am now to conſider another part of it; which conſiſts in too *perfunctory* a *performance* of it. Beſides thoſe who are truly unprofitable, becauſe they ſlight or neglect the duties of religion; there is another ſort of men, who at the laſt day will fall under the ſame character and condemnation; not becauſe they perform no duties, but becauſe their performance of them is depreciated by coldneſs and formality: men, who make a fair appearance of religion, and yet have no inward ſpiritual life; men, who do generally obſerve the external duties of religion, but with ſo little guſt, with ſuch indifference and Lukewarmneſs, that they are neither acceptable to God, nor uſeful to themſelves. This ſtate of deadneſs may be conſidered either more *generally*, as it runs through the whole courſe of our lives and actions; or more *particularly*, in this or that inſtance of religion.

1. When

1. When 'tis ſo general, that the bent and courſe of our lives is, for want of reliſh of the things of God, perverted and depraved; when we have no deſigns, drive on no ends, that are ſuitable to the *excellency* and *dignity* of our *nature*; to the *holineſs* of our *profeſſion*, and to the great and manifeſt *obligations* of God: when we have no joys or pleaſures, no thirſts or appetites, that do truly become a Chriſtian; when we make no progreſs, no advance towards our great end; when our diſcourſes and employment have no tincture of the Spirit, and no tendency to edification: I think we may then boldly conclude, that this is a ſtate of *carnality* and *death*; and that this want of reliſh, in the general courſe of our lives, proceeds from a real want of a ſincere faith, and true illumination. For were the mind once truly enlightened; were it once clearly convinced, firmly and habitually perſuaded, of the beauty and excellence of the things of God, as we ſhould have notions different from thoſe of worldly carnal men; ſo would there conſequently be a difference in the nature of our hopes and fears, of our deſires and deſigns, of our joys and ſorrows; and as neceſſarily in the main ſcope and tendency of our converſation. Whoever therefore finds this general ſtupidity in the courſe

courſe of his life, let him not flatter himſelf in the performance of any of the duties of religion: he has a corrupt, carnal, and blind heart; his performances proceed not from true principles, and have not that life and vigour in them that they ought; they are as different from the performances of a man truly regenerate and ſanctified, as the civilities and compliments of a well-bred acquaintance, from the ſubſtantial offices of a ſincere and affectionate friend. Nor can any man, who will take the leaſt pains to examine himſelf, be ignorant of, or miſtaken in the condition of his ſoul, if this be it. For whoever will act honeſtly and impartially, ought not to paſs a ſentence of abſolution on himſelf, upon the bare performance of ſome relative, or inſtrumental duties of religion; but he ought to enquire, firſt, what virtues he practiſes, which put him upon *expence*, *hazard*, or *travail*; what works of piety or charity he performs; and what proportion they bear to his ability. Next, he ought to conſider the *deſign* and *end* he propoſes to himſelf in all his religious performances; whether he ſeek the honour of God, the welfare of man, and his own improvement and growth in goodneſs; or whether he does this merely to acquit himſelf of a taſk, and diſcharge himſelf of what he takes

for granted as a duty, though he finds no pleaſure, no advantage in it. Thirdly, He muſt reflect upon the *frame* and *temper* of his mind in reference to theſe duties; what hunger and thirſt he has for righteouſneſs; what warmth, ardor, elevation, or earneſtneſs of mind accompanies his performances; what peace and pleaſure his reflection on them; or whether religion be not a burthen to him, or ſomething to which cuſtom only reconciles him. Laſtly, He ought to examine what operation, what *influence* his religious performances have upon him. Prayer, hearing, reading, and ſuch-like duties, do naturally tend to enlighten the mind, purify the heart, increaſe our love, ſtrengthen our faith, and confirm our hope; and therefore, where this is not the effect of them, we may conclude, that they are not diſcharged in that manner and with that ſincerity they ought. He therefore, that will examine himſelf aright, muſt not aſk himſelf how often he reads, how often he hears, *&c.* and then reſt there; but muſt aſk himſelf what *effect* theſe performances have had upon his mind; which he will ſoon diſcern, if he demand of himſelf, what the bent and ſcope of his life is; how much he advances and improves in the conqueſt of any vice, and the attainment

ment of any virtue; what he loves, or what he hates; what eſteem he has for the things of God, and what for the things of men. And, in a word, how he follows after univerſal righteouſneſs; and how he increaſes in purity of heart, and poverty of ſpirit.

2. *Lukewarmneſs* and *coldneſs* may be conſidered more *particularly*, as it diſcovers itſelf in the performance of this or that duty; in hearing, reading, prayer, and participation of the Lord's Supper. Now, 'tis certain, that there is a deadneſs in theſe duties, which proceeds from a *carnal* and *unſanctified* heart, and is a plain ſymptom of a *ſtate of ſin*: and yet it is too common, that they, that are ſubject to it, make little reflection upon it, and are little concerned for it. On the other hand, many complain of lifeleſneſs in duty, where there is no juſt ground for this complaint; and there is no ſmall evil to ſuch; for it diſturbs the peace of their minds, damps the chearfulneſs and alacrity of their ſervice, and clogs and encumbers their religion with needleſs doubts and ſcruples. Some have gone about to ſet this matter right very unſkilfully; and whilſt they have, as as they thought, ſhunned *enthuſiaſtic* raptures, and *irregular* heats, have really betrayed the cauſe of *true* and *ſolid fervency*

of ſpirit; and talked of prayer, and ſuch other duties, in ſuch a manner, as cannot but reflect diſadvantageouſly on themſelves, amongſt ſuch, as are moderately verſed in the ſcriptures, and have any experience of the power of God's Word and Spirit upon their ſouls. But what ſurprizes me moſt is, that ſome of very deſerved repute, have taught, that the *ſeeking ſpiritual pleaſure in prayer*, is an *enemy to Perfection:* that *heat* and *ardor* of ſpirit in prayer, does often happen to the *weakeſt* Chriſtians; and very ſeldom to the *perfect*. But my buſineſs not being to combat the opinions of men, but to advance truths in the moſt charitable, and in the moſt effectual manner that I can; therefore, without taking notice of the motives or reaſons which have byaſſed any on this ſubject, I will lay down two or three propoſitions, which will, I hope, clear this matter, and promote the deſign I am now carrying on.

1. Then, *Lifeleſneſs* or lukewarmneſs in theſe duties muſt never *be conſtant*. There is a vaſt difference between *habitual* and *accidental* coldneſs in duty; the former is the ſymptom of worldly, carnal, and unregenerate minds; but not the latter. Many are the accidents which diſturb and indiſpoſe the body; many are the things which

which diſtract and clog the mind: from both which becauſe we ſhall never be utterly free in this world; therefore our devotion will never be ſo conſtant and uniform, but that it will have its *interruptions* and *allays*; and dulneſs and lifeleſneſs will ſometimes ſeize upon the beſt of Chriſtians. But then, if this ſpiritual deadneſs in religious exerciſes be *fixed, conſtant*, and *habitual*, it muſt needs be a proof of a corrupt mind: for 'tis impoſſible that there ſhould be a true principle of grace within, which ſhould never, or very rarely, ſhew itſelf in the ſincerity and fervency of our devotion. How is it poſſible that that man, who is generally ſlight and ſuperficial in his confeſſion, ſhould have a true compunction and ſincere contrition for ſin? How is it poſſible that he, who is generally indifferent, formal, and cold in his petitions, ſhould have a juſt ſenſe either of his wants or dangers; or a true value for the grace and favour of God? The ſum is, deadneſs in duty is either general or rare, common or accidental: if it befals us *commonly*, 'tis an argument of an unregenerate heart; if rarely, 'tis not. But if the returns of life and deadneſs in duty be ſo frequent and unconſtant, that 'tis impoſſible to determine whether the one or the other prevail

moſt; then 'tis plain, that the ſtate alſo of ſuch a man is very dubious.

2. Duty muſt never be deſtitute of *ſincerity*, though it may of *pleaſure* and tranſport; it muſt never be without *ſerioufneſs* and concernment, though it may be very defective in the *degrees* of *love* and *ardency*. Thus in prayer the tenderneſs and contrition of the ſoul, diſſolved in love and ſorrow, is a frame of ſpirit much above what the penitent commonly arrives at. But an averſion for ſin, a firm reſolution to forſake it, and a hearty deſire to be enabled by the grace of God ſo to do, is what he muſt not want. So again, joy and tranſport, the ardor and exultancy of mind, is the effect of a clear underſtanding, an aſſured conſcience, an heart inflamed with love, and a ſtrict life: whoever therefore falls ſhort in the one, will generally fall ſhort in the other too. But every Chriſtian that is truly ſuch, muſt have a true ſenſe of his wants, a hearty deſire to pleaſe God, a true notion of his goodneſs, and a ſteddy dependence upon it through Chriſt. And theſe things are ſufficient to unite our hearts and our lips in the ſame petitions; to make us in earneſt in all the duties we perform, and careful to intend the main end of them.

3. The

3. The prayer of the *perfect* man is generally offered up with the *tendereſt* and moſt *exalted* paſſion; and a holy pleaſure mingles itſelf in every part of his office: his petitions and praiſes; his confeſſions, deprecations and confidences, are all of them expreſſions of warm and delightful paſſions. And how can we well conceive it otherwiſe? Muſt not thoſe *praiſes* and *Magnificats* be full of joy and tranſport which flow from a full aſſurance of the divine favour, from a long experience of his love, and from the glorious proſpect of a bleſſed eternity? Can thoſe *deprecations* and *confidences* want a heavenly calm and tranquillity of ſpirit, which reſt upon the Mediation of Jeſus, the promiſes of an immutable God, and the pledge of his Spirit? Can thoſe *confeſſions* want contrition, that have all the tenderneſs that holy zeal and the humbleſt reflections can inſpire them with? which are poured forth by a ſoul enlightened, purified, ſtrong in the faith, rooted and grounded in love; by a ſoul conſequently that has the livelieſt ſenſe of deformity, and danger of ſin, of the beauty and pleaſure of holineſs, of the infinite goodneſs of God, and of that love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge? Can, finally, thoſe *petitions* want deſire and flame,

which are offered up by a ſoul that hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs, that counts all things but dung and droſs in compariſon of Jeſus, that pants after God, that longs to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt? And as we may thus, from the nature of things, collect what kind of prayers thoſe of the perfect man generally are; ſo may we, from the example of the royal *Pſalmiſt*, and others, demonſtrate all this to be no vain ſpeculation, but real matter of fact. 'Tis true, *weight* and *dignity* of *matter*, *gravity* and *ſignificancy* of *expreſſion*, are the character moſt conſpicuous in *publick* offices in the beſt and moſt ancient prayers, and particularly in the Lord's prayer. We find in them few or no figures of ſpeech, no vehemence of expreſſion. But it is true too, that the devotion of a ſoul diſengaged, as it were, from the body, retired from the world, collected within itſelf, raiſed by daily contemplation, and accuſtomed to converſe with heaven, flows naturally and eaſily. Thoſe great *ideas*, which ſuch a prayer as that of our Lord's compoſure preſents to the mind, inflame the deſire, awaken all the paſſions of the holy man, without any labour of imagination, or artifice of words.

Thus

Thus I have conſidered the nature of lukewarmneſs, and ſhewed how far the perfect man is removed from it. My next buſineſs is, to perſuade and exhort men to quit it, and become ſincere and zealous. Only I muſt, firſt, take notice by the way, that beſides idleneſs and lukewarmneſs, there is ſometimes a third cauſe or occaſion of unfruitfulneſs; which deſerves never to be ſlighted: that is *fickleneſs*, *unſteadineſs*, or *inconſtancy*. Many there are, who often propoſe, project, and reſolve great matters; but never bring forth any fruit to perfection: what they build one day, they throw down another. They put on as many various moral forms, as *Proteus* in the poets does natural ones: ſometimes they are in a fit of zeal; at other times nothing but coldneſs and bare form: ſometimes they are in the camp of virtue; ſometimes in that of vice. In a word, they halt, like the *Iſraelites*, between *God* and *Baal*; and are divided and diſtracted between a *ſenſe* of *duty* and the *love* of the *world* and the *body*; between the *checks* and incitements of *conſcience* on the one hand, and ſome fooliſh *inclinations* on the other. This ſtate I have had an eye to very often, nor ſhall I forget it here; but ſhall propoſe ſuch a method for the cure of lukewarmneſs and formality, as may be alſo of very good uſe to all ſuch, as

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fall ſhort of the main end of religion; being not truly and thoroughly changed; but are only *almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians*, and only not altogether *ſo far from the kingdom of heaven* as others. This being premiſed, I proceed, and,

1. I will enquire into the cauſes from whence lukewarmneſs, and all abortive attempts after virtue, flow.

2. I will ſhew the *folly*, *guilt*, and *danger* of a *Laodicean* ſtate.

§. 1. Of the cauſes, &c. Theſe are generally four.

1. Men finding themſelves under great difficulties in coming up to holineſs, in the true genuine and goſpel-notion of it, have endeavoured to enlarge the way, and widen the gate that leads to life; and have therefore formed to themſelves more ſoft and pliant notions of vice and virtue; ſuch as may be more eaſily accommodated, either to their particular *inclinations*, or to the *modes* and *faſhions* of the world, than thoſe of Chriſt and the apoſtles can. Hence it is, that amongſt ſuch as pretend to ſome regard for religion, humility, poverty of ſpirit, ſelf-denial, abſtinence and mortification, are ſo far from being viſible in their practice, that we ſeem to

to have almoſt loſt the notion of them. And the pride of life, and the luſt of the eyes, are ſo univerſally practiſed, that tho' we know, that theſe in St. *John* are the names of vices, we ſcarce know what the things themſelves are. We have confounded the means and bounds of vice and virtue; and ſuch are the freedoms, I will not ſay of thoſe who profeſs debauchery, but Chriſtianity, that if they be conſiſtent with the ſanctity and purity of the goſpel, it will be hard to determine what exceſs is. And, in a word, how many are there who, making a profeſſion of living by faith, and looking for the bleſſed hope and the glorious appearance of Chriſt, do yet live, as if all the buſineſs of life were to get and enjoy as much of this world as they can; who profeſſing themſelves the diſciples of Chriſt, whoſe heart was lowly, his fortune mean, and his appearance humble, do yet lay out their time, their labour, their wealth, on this one deſign, to make ſuch a ſhew, ſuch a figure in the world, as may render them the gaze and envy of their neighbours? And as our indulgence to ourſelves in theſe things, which relate to the pride and vanity of life, and the eaſe and appetites of the body, is very great; ſo on the ſame ground, and for the ſame reaſon, is our zeal for the intereſt of virtue,

virtue, and the honour of God, very little, faint, and remiſs. Converſation has very little ſavour, very little grace in it; and we are ſo far from being reſolute and induſtrious to awe or ſhame vice abroad, that we ourſelves ſhould be almoſt out of countenance, if we ſhould be obſerved to pay any particular reſpect to religion or virtue in company. The government of our families is ſo lax and eaſy, that it ſavours more of coldneſs and indifferency, than fervency of ſpirit. 'Tis true, indeed, theſe I am ſpeaking of do generally frequent the houſe of God: *and they ſit before him as his people; and delight to hear his word:* But ſo did the *Jews*, when God tells them, in the prophet *Ezek.* xxxiii. 31. *that their hearts went after their covetouſneſs:* And in the prophet *Iſaiah*, we have but an odd character of the morals of theſe people; of whom God ſaith, *Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways:* Nay, further, *they delight in approaching to God*, Iſa. lviii. 2. Now though ſuch, as I am ſpeaking of, may not be guilty to this degree, ſo as to be chargeable with open wickedneſs; yet I am very much afraid, that even in this duty they but promote the cheat and impoſture they put upon themſelves, and make their diligence in this point miniſter to quiet their conſciences in their *Laodi-*

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cean ſtate; for 'twere eaſy to prove, that ſuch as theſe do more generally aim at the entertainment of the ear, than the reformation of the heart. And we may ſay of preachers now, as God did of *Ezekiel: And lo, thou art unto them as a lovely ſong, of one that has a very pleaſant voice,* Ezek. xxxiii. 32. The muſick of the voice; the gracefulneſs of delivery; a flow of words; the ſurprize of novelty, and notion; the beauty of ſentences; and the ſparkling of wit and fancy, or an appearance of learning: theſe are, I doubt, too often the things that draw together and charm an auditory: and ſo all are pleaſed, but none converted or edified; for who ſweats or bluſhes, who trembles or grows pale at theſe ſermons? Who goes away from them wounded or ſtruck through, ſerious and penſive, full of pious fears and devout deſires?

2. A *Laodicean* ſtate ſprings from ſloth and puſillanimity, or the want of a thorough and well-grounded reſolution. This was one cauſe of the *Iſraelites* fluctuation and uncertainty; they were indeed deſirous of a *Canaan,* but were not forward to purchaſe it, by tedious marches, hazardous encounters, and the hardſhip of hunger and thirſt, and ſuch like; they were ever and anon willing to have preferred

ferred the diſhonour and ſervitude of *Egypt*, with ſecurity and fulneſs, before a *Canaan* on theſe terms. And thus it is, this day, with Chriſtians of a *Laodicean* ſpirit, and a doubtful ſtaggering allegiance. An heaven they would have, but would not purchaſe it at too dear a rate; they would be accounted the diſciples of Chriſt, and ſhare in the merits of his ſufferings, but they would not take up his croſs, in any ſenſe, and follow him. But, alas! *Iſrael* might as well have gained their liberty, without going out of *Egypt*; or a *Canaan*, without travel, and hardſhip, and blood; as theſe, virtue, and heaven, without watchfulneſs and induſtry; we may as well hope to ſupport and encreaſe the health and ſtrength of the body, without food or exerciſe; as that of the ſoul, without meditation and prayer; we may as ſoon conquer our enemies without diſcipline, expence, and blows; as maſter our corruptions, and become virtuous, without ſpiritual watchfulneſs, travail or contention. There is indeed force and efficacy enough in the word of God, to enlighten the mind, and purify the heart; if we would but frequently and ſeriouſly read and meditate it. The grace of the Spirit is ſufficient to conquer our corruptions, and ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh us in faith and obedience, if we did but earneſtly

earneſtly and frequently pray for it; and cheriſh and improve it, when obtained. The means which God has preſcribed are undoubtedly proper and ſuitable, powerful and effectual, to the attainment, preſervation, and increaſe of holineſs; and all his ordinances have a divine virtue and energy in them, if they be but duly and conſcientiouſly made uſe of. But if we do not watch, if we do not meditate, if we do not pray; if we expoſe ourſelves to a vain and trifling converſation; if we indulge the body in all the eaſe it is inclined to, and put ourſelves upon no duties, practiſe no diſcipline that we have any reluctancy for; 'tis not to be wondered at, if our virtue be crazy and ſickly, if our performances be cold and unedifying, our faith weak, our affections low and grovelling, our life unſteady and unprofitable, our religion deſtitute of true pleaſure, and our latter end of any rational comfort, or well-grounded confidence. 'Tis naturally to be expected that the ſoul of the ſluggard ſhould be like his field. *Prov.* xxiv. 30. *I went by the field of the ſlothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of underſtanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the ſtone wall thereof was broken down:* This is one plain cauſe, and commonly the firſt, of our

halting between *God* and *Baal*; namely, our idleneſs and ſloth in religion, joined with puſillanimity and cowardice, which moves us to decline all difficulties, and diſables us to make a bold reſiſtance againſt temptations: how criminal and guilty this muſt render us in the ſight of God, 'tis no difficulty to gueſs. Is this the zeal, the revenge of an humble and active penitent? Is this to redeem the time, and efface the memory of our paſt ſins and provocations? Is this the converſation, that becomes the children of the light, and of the day? Is this our hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs? Is this our ambition, our paſſion for an heaven? Finally, is it thus we requite the mercies and obligations of God, and the love of Jeſus, that paſſeth knowledge? Shall ſuch halting trimming Chriſtians as theſe, think ye, ever be judged endued with a true and living faith, who expreſs in the whole tenour of their lives, ſo much coldneſs and indifference for their ſalvation, which the Son of God thought worth the purchaſing, by ſo much travail and ſo much ſorrow, ſo much ſhame and ſo much blood?

3. A third cauſe of our halting between *God* and *Baal* is ſome degrees of infidelity. This was the caſe of *Iſrael* too.

They were ever prone to idolatry; partly trained up to it in *Egypt*, and elſewhere; partly being more capable of forming an *idea* of a finite and topical God, than of an infinite and univerſal one, *Jer.* xxiii. 23. partly being fond of following the faſhions of other nations. And, laſtly, moved partly by that great and long proſperity, which *Egypt* and other idolatrous nations enjoyed; and no doubt comparing it too with the variety and uncertainty of their own fortune, and the frequent diſappointment of their expectations, *Hoſea* ii. never laying it to heart all the while, that the way to ſecure their proſperity, was to change, not their God, but their manners. I would to God, this were not too lively a deſcription of the ſtate of too many Chriſtians; and that we could not trace our lukewarmneſs and fickleneſs in religion too plainly back to the ſame ſource or origin; namely, ſome degrees of infidelity. I wiſh the proſperity of the wicked do not ſomewhat undermine the belief of a providence: I wiſh, whatever we talk of a treaſure in another world, we do not now and then think it wiſeſt to have our portion in this. I am afraid, that the decays and diſſolutions of our nature in death, the rottenneſs and corruption of the grave, and the variety of changes and fortunes our very duſt undergoes, may tempt

us to ſome ſcruples and jealouſies about a poſthumous life. But however it be in theſe points, I am too well aſſured, that we do often doubt, whether virtue be the true bleſſedneſs of life: whether there be that pleaſure in righteouſneſs the ſcripture affirms there is. I am confident, the notions of righteouſneſs and holineſs, with which the ſcripture furniſhes us, are often blurred and blotted by the maxims and cuſtoms of the world; and perſuade myſelf, that there is ſcarcely one of thoſe, that are *Laodiceans* aad trimmers in religion, that do not flatter themſelves that God will not be as ſevere as his threats; and that he will receive them into heaven upon milder and ſofter terms than the goſpel propoſes. Some ſuch kind of infidelity as this muſt poſſeſs the heart, where-ever the life is ſo infinitely below our profeſſion. When *the word preached doth not profit*, it is becauſe it is not *mingled* with a due meaſure of *faith in thoſe that hear it*. If we did truly believe the revelations of God; if we did ſee the promiſes of God as evident and preſent by faith, tho' diſtant in themſelves, 'twere impoſſible but they muſt move, but they muſt take us; 'twere impoſſible but they muſt enkindle in us another ſort of deſire; and this deſire would ſoon produce another ſort of endeavours,

another ſort of life. When *Moſes* beheld *Canaan* from *Piſga*, how paſſionately did he deſire to enter into *that* good land! When the diſciples had ſeen Jeſus aſcend up into heaven, how were they tranſported with a deſire of following him! how unſpeakable was their joy! how fervent their prayers! how laſting and enlarged their gratitude! *They returned to* Jeruſalem *with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God.* How does a proſpect of gain captivate the covetous! How does the fancy or expectation of pleaſure inflame the voluptuary! How does the ſight of vanity and grandeur infect the proud! and the hope of glory fire the ambitious? What, hath the beauty and pleaſure of holineſs no attraction? Has heaven no charms in it? Has the favour and love of God, and of Jeſus, no force, no power in them? Surely we have not the face to deny, but that the promiſes of God are great and precious ones; and if they raiſe no paſſion in us, it muſt not be through want of *excellence* and *lovelineſs* in *them*, but want of *faith* in *us*. And then judge you, how acceptable this kind of infidelity muſt render us to God: what value can God have for a people whom no kindneſs can oblige, no arguments convince; with whom no miracles can gain belief; no aſſurances or

promiſes find credit? Hell is the portion of the *fearful* and *unbeliever*. Rev. xxi. 8. And what dreadful judgments did overwhelm *Iſrael*, as often as they thus halted between God and idols! It did not excuſe them, that they had ſome ſort of *veneration* for the memory of *Moſes* and his *miracles*; ſince this was not able to over-rule their *prejudice* and *ſuperſtition*; that they retained ſome honour for *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and that *God* which was the *fear* of their *fathers*, ſince they had as much, or more, for the nations round about them, and their *gods* too. And whatever power they did acknowledge in the God of heaven, or whatever benefit they did own themſelves to have derived from him, as I can hardly think the memory of either was utterly extinguiſhed amongſt them; all this availed them nothing, while they made their court to other gods too, and put their truſt in their patronage and protection. Though this be ſufficient to make us ſenſible of the guilt of a *Laodicean* virtue and uncertain halting faith; yet I muſt advance on, and obſerve unto you a worſe principle, if worſe can be, of this deportment yet, which is,

4. The fourth fountain of this unſteadineſs and remiſneſs in religion is, ſome remains of corruption; the prevalency of ſome

ſome vicious paſſion or other. Men's actions are the plaineſt indications of their affections. If the life looks two ways, we need not doubt but that the heart does ſo too. This was that made the young man in the goſpel fluctuate ſo between *Chriſt* and *mammon*; this was the caſe of *Herod*: he had yielded, no doubt, to the power and force of the *Baptiſt*'s *reaſons*, if he had not been drawn back by the charms of his *Herodias*. And this is the caſe of every man who is but *almoſt* a Chriſtian; he is under the aſcendant of ſome ſilly or vile luſt or other; this is that which ſpoils the taſte of the hidden *manna*, and diminiſheth the price of *Canaan*. Without doubt men would apply themſelves more vigorouſly to ſpiritual things, were they not too fond of the body and the pleaſures of it; they would certainly ſeek the kingdom of heaven more earneſtly, and make a better proviſion than they do for the other world, were they not too much taken with this, and therefore too apt to ſet up their reſt on this ſide *Jordan*. Now if this be ſo, what can we expect? They only who *conquer*, are crowned; they that *ſow* to the *fleſh* and to the *world*, can reap nothing from theſe but *corruption*. Theſe kind of Chriſtians, though peradventure they are not ſlaves to any *infamous* and *ſcandalous* luſts, are yet entangled by ſome other, not much leſs injurious,

though not to *reputation*, yet to *purity of heart*; they are captivated to the world and fleſh, though their chains ſeem better poliſhed, and of a finer metal; they cannot mount upwards, they cannot conquer, being retarded and kept under, if not by the *ſtrength of temptation*, yet by their own *ſoftneſs* and *weakneſs*; and yet, why ſhould I doubt but theſe are conquered by temptation? The more *innocent* the object of any one's paſſions is, generally the more *fatal*, becauſe we are the more apt to *indulge* ourſelves in it. The cauſes of lukewarmneſs being thus pointed out, 'tis evident what the cure of it conſiſts in, namely, in forming juſt and correct notions of virtue and vice; in ſtrengthening and forming our faith, and in perfecting and compleating our reformation. I will now endeavour to poſſeſs the minds of men with an averſion and dread of this ſtate of lukewarmneſs, by ſhewing,

1. The folly;
2. The guilt; and,
3. The danger of it.

1. The folly. How reaſonably may I here addreſs myſelf to the lukewarm in the words of *Elijah* to the *Iſraelites*: *How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow*

low him. 1 Kings xviii. 21. If you do indeed believe, that your ſafety and happineſs depends upon God, then ſerve him in good earneſt; but if you think this depends upon the world, the fleſh, and the devil, then ſerve theſe; if you really think that virtue and religion are the moſt ſolid and ſtable treaſure, then ſtrive ſincerely and vigorouſly to poſſeſs yourſelves of them; but if you really think that the eaſe and pleaſure of the body, reſpect, and pomp, and ſtate, is the proper portion, and ſovereign good of man, then devote and offer up yourſelves to theſe. For what a folly is that life, which will neither procure us the happineſs of this world, nor of another? To what purpoſe is it to liſten only ſo much to conſcience, as to damp and chill our pleaſure; and ſo much to pleaſure, as to diſturb the peace and repoſe of conſcience? But, indeed, as the words of *Elijah* were rather an *irony* than any real doubt, whether *Baal* or the Lord were God; rather a ſcornful deriſion of their folly and ſtupidity, than a ſerious exhortation to deliberate, whether idolatry or the worſhip of the true God were to be choſen; I doubt not, but mine will ſeem to you to carry no other ſound in them. The diſparity is ſo vaſt between God and the world, between religion and ſenſuality, covetouſneſs and ambition; between thoſe hopes and

enjoyments we may reap from the one, and thoſe we can fancy in the other; that there is no place for doubting what choice we are to make, or to which ſide we are to adhere; nay, in this we are more criminal than the *Iſraelites*, being ſelf-condemned. The *Iſraelites*, indeed, ſeemed to be at a loſs, whether the Lord or *Baal* were God; they doubted under whoſe protection they might thrive beſt. But at this day whoever believes a God, knows very well there is none beſides him. Whatever paſſion we have for the world, and the things of it; whatever ſpiritual idolatry we are guilty of, our opinions are not yet ſo far corrupted, as to atribute to them in reality any thing like divinity. Whilſt we dote on wealth, we at the ſame time know that it makes itſelf wings and flies away: whilſt on greatneſs and power, we know that 'tis but a piece of empty and toilſome pegeantry, and often the ſubject of miſery and diſmal tragedies, not incident to a lower ſtate: whilſt we dote on pleaſure, we are well aſſured that 'tis diſhonourable and ſhort, and intermixed with fears and ſhame, and torment; we know that nothing here below is able to free our ſtate and fortune from calamity, our mind from guilt, the body from death, much leſs the whole man from a miſerable eternity. In one word, we know that what we admire is vanity,

vanity, and what we worſhip is indeed an idol. This being ſo, I will inſiſt no longer on this topick; for ſince the world bears no competition with God in our opinion, though it often rivals him in our affections, we are not to impute the halting of a *Laodicean* Chriſtian to any perſuaſion of omnipotence or all-ſufficiency, or any thing like Divinity, in the things he dotes on, ſerves, and worſhips, but we muſt find out ſome other reaſon of it. And that is generally this: we are willing to believe, that our fondneſs for the world, and our indulgence to the body, is conſiſtent enough with religion; that it is no violation of our faith, nor provocation to God; nor conſequently prejudice to our eternal intereſt; and then 'tis no wonder if we blend and compound religion and ſenſuality; and ſtand divided in our affections; and conſequently halt in our ſervice between God and the world. To prevent this, I will ſhew,

2. That this is a great *ſin*; which is ſufficiently evident from this ſingle conſideration, that it fruſtrates the efficacy of the goſpel, and the Spirit, and entirely defeats the great deſign of the Chriſtian religion. For, 1. Religion has

no

no effectual influence upon the lukewarm himſelf; the goſpel works no thorough change in him. The ſinner is not converted into a ſaint; nor human nature perfected by participation of a divine one. 2. The *Laodiceans* can never offer up to God, any gift, any ſacrifice worthy of him; nor render him any ſervice acceptable to him: the *kingdom of God is righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. *He that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God and approved of men.* But alas! theſe men are almoſt utter ſtrangers to theſe things; a few faint and irreſolute wiſhes, formal and cuſtomary prayers, niggardly and grumbling alms, and an attendance upon God's word, rather out of ſpiritual wantonneſs than devotion; theſe are the offerings they can make God; and will God be better pleaſed with theſe, than he was with thoſe of *Iſrael*, that were deformed with maims and blemiſhes? *Mal.* i. 8. *Offer now theſe to thy governour; will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept of thy perſon? ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* The *Magi*, indeed, left their country, and offered *gold, frankincenſe and myrrh to our Saviour*, Mat. ii. *David* would *not ſacrifice to God, of that which coſt him nothing*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. The primitive Chriſtians offered up

to

to God prayers and tears, labours and travels; nay, their honours, their fortunes, their lives, their blood. But, alas! what have theſe men to offer? They have not love enough to put them upon any expence, nor faith enough to put them upon any hardſhips, for the ſake of God and virtue. *For though they think themſelves rich and increaſed in goods, and to have need of nothing, yet* are they poor, wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and naked, *Rev.* iii. 17. And ſhall theſe receive a crown of righteouſneſs? Shall theſe ſhare in the kingdom of Jeſus? Shall theſe partake in the triumph of the laſt day? It can never be: they do nothing worthy of the goſpel, nothing worthy of the Spirit of God; nothing that can entitle them to the benefit of the croſs of Chriſt.

3. The life of the *Laodicean* Chriſtian will never do any credit to religion, or reflect any honour on the goſpel. No man will be ever able to diſcern the beauty of holineſs, or the power and efficacy of divine truths, from the practice and converſation of ſuch an one. Ah! had the carriage of the primitive times been ſuch as his, I know not what *miracles* might have done; I am ſure *examples* would never have

have made any proſelytes. But the Chriſtians then acted thoſe virtues, which the *Pagans* only pretended to; and faith in Jeſus atchieved thoſe victories over the world, which the *Jews* (ſo debauched and ſtupid were they grown) did in the declenſion of that ſtate neither underſtand nor pretend to: this was that which made the world admire and love Chriſtianity. After thus much ſaid of the effects of this ſort of carriage; I need ſcarcely put any one in mind, what will be the laſt and ſaddeſt effect of it; for if our Chriſtianity be ſuch, that it neither truly ſets us free from our bondage to the world and fleſh; nor inriches our ſoul with true and ſolid virtues; if it neither promote the honour of God, nor the good of man, it muſt unavoidably follow, that having no true title to God's favour, nor any rational ground, on which to build an aſſurance of it, we can reap no true comfort or pleaſure from religion here, or any reward from it hereafter. Alas! what talk I of comfort and reward? *Diſtreſs and anguiſh muſt take hold of the ſinners in Sion, and fearfulneſs muſt ſurpriſe the hypocrite:* and from the troubles and miſeries of *this* life, they muſt go down into the everlaſting torments of *another*. The ſcripture is plain; God will ſpue them out of his mouth,

mouth, as he did the *Laodicean:* he will ſhut the *gate of heaven* againſt them, as againſt the *fooliſh virgins* that had no *oil* in their *lamps:* and their hell will have one torment in it, which is incident to no others, that they had once the hopes of heaven; and it is no ſmall aggravation of miſery to fall into it, even from the expectation of happineſs.

This is not, as I obſerved above, to be applied to accidental dulneſs or deadneſs in duty; nor are the decays and abatements of love, which good men ſometimes ſuffer, immediately to be pronounced damnable. But yet *theſe* are to be put in mind of the danger they are in; and recalled to their former zeal, in the words of the Spirit to the Church of *Epheſus*; *Nevertheleſs, I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do the firſt works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent,* Rev. ii. 4, 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of Zeal. *What in general is meant by* Zeal; *and what is that perfection of holineſs in which it conſiſts. Whether the perfect man muſt be adorned with a confluence of all virtues; and to what degree of holineſs he may be ſuppoſed to arrive.*

I Am arrived at the *laſt ſtate* of *perfection*, which I chuſe to call a ſtate of *zeal*; not only becauſe the *ſcripture* ſeems to direct me to this expreſſion, but alſo becauſe it ſeems to me more full and proper than others, that *may* be or *are* made uſe of for the ſame end. A ſtate of *union* is an expreſſion that better ſuits *another* life than *this*. For the leſſon the *perfect* man is ever and anon to revolve in his mind, is, that the preſent life is a life of labour, and travel, and ſufferings; the future one, of rewards, and crowns, and enjoyments. Then as to that other expreſſion, the ſtate of *love*, it ſuits my purpoſe well enough; but does not come up ſo juſtly and exactly to it, as the ſtate of *zeal*; for I take *zeal* to be *love*, in the utmoſt elevation and vivacity that it is capable of.

And now, what a noble, what a fruitful *argument* am I entering upon? Methinks I feel my ſoul grow *warm*, and *in-*

kindle

kindle upon my approaching it; and my firſt views or contemplations of it inſpire me with deſires of the ſame nature with itſelf. I am concerned to ſee myſelf confined and limited by the laws of *method*; and find myſelf inclined to wiſh, that I were now to write, rather a juſt *volume*, than a few *pages*. Here the heroic *acts*, or, what is more, the heroic *lives* of ſaints, martyrs, and confeſſors, preſent themſelves to my thoughts; here *human* nature, enriched, adorned, and elevated to the utmoſt degree, by a participation of the *divine* one; here the power of *God's Word*, the energy of the *Holy Ghoſt*, the triumphs of *faith*, and the extaſies of *love*, would be deſcribed; here the different excellencies of different *virtues*, and the different value of *good works*, ſhould be ſtated and ſettled, and the various paths, in which men purſue the *heights* of virtue and the nobleſt deſigns, be examined, and ſolid piety and true wiſdom be refined from the alloys and mixtures of enthuſiaſm, ſuperſtition, fancy, or whatever elſe they are disfigured and debaſed by. But this cannot *now* be done, and it may be it could not at all be done by *me:* no meaſure of the *Spirit*, peradventure, below that with which the *apoſtles* were inſpired, is ſufficient to treat this argument as it requires. Beſides, according

ing to my capacity, I have been all along making this point. When, in the *firſt* ſection, I ſtated the *notion* of *perfection*, ſhewed by what ſteps we advanced to it, what *means* we are to make uſe of, and what would be the *fruit* of it, I did in effect deſcribe to my reader, the ſtate of *zeal*, and marked out the path that leads to it. When, in the *ſecond*, I laboured to eſtabliſh the true *liberty* of man, upon the overthrow and extirpation not only of *mortal ſin*, and of *idleneſs* and *lukewarmneſs*, but alſo, as far as it might be, even of *ſin of infirmity*, and *original corruption*; what elſe was I doing, but proſecuting this one deſign, namely, the implanting and propagating in the world the ſtate of *zeal*? However, ſomething there ſeems to me yet wanting to *compleat* my undertaking: and that I am to endeavour now. To which end I will here diſcourſe of three things:

1. What it is in general I mean by *zeal*.
2. What is that *Perfection* of *holineſs* or *righteouſneſs*, wherein it conſiſts. And,
3. Of the *efficacy* or *force* of this *holineſs*, as it exerts itſelf in *good works*. Of theſe, the *two former* ſhall be the argument of *this*; the *third* of the *following* chapter.

§. 1. Of *zeal* in *general*, what it is. I do not exclude ſome degrees of *zeal* from every period of the Chriſtian's life; ſincerity cannot ſubſiſt wholly without it. *The hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*, which is the ſubject of one of our Saviour's *Beatitudes*, muſt be more or leſs in every child of God. But it may ſignify one thing in the *infant*, another in the *adult* Chriſtian: in the one, the conqueſt of ſin, or rather of the reliques and remains of former ſinful habits, and the attainment of habitual goodneſs, is the *object* of this *hunger and thirſt*: in the other, it imports a vehement deſire of whatever is yet wanting to a farther accompliſhment and conſummation of righteouſneſs *already* fixed and eſtabliſhed; the entire and ultimate perfection of it in *heaven*; and in the *mean* time, the promoting the divine glory upon *earth*, whatever it coſt him to do ſo. By a ſtate of *zeal* then, I here mean virtue or holineſs, not in the bud, or in the bloſſom, but in its full ſtrength and ſtature, grown up, and ripe, and loaded with bleſſed fruits: I mean *that* holineſs that is the reſult of illumination, or clearneſs of judgment, of the ſtrength and force of holy reſolution, and the vigour and energy of holy paſſions. In a word, I mean that ſolid, ſpiritual, and operative religion, which

may be felt and enjoyed by us ourſelves, in the ſerenity and tranquillity of conſcience, the longings and breathings of pious deſires, the joys and pleaſures of a rational aſſurance; diſcerned by the world in our lives and actions, in the modeſty of our garb, in the plainneſs and humility of all things elſe that pertain to the *port* of life; in the temperance of our meals, the purity and heavenlineſs of converſation, the moderation of our deſigns and enjoyments, the inſtruction of our families, with a tender and indefatigable watchfulneſs over them; the conſtancy of our attendance *upon*, and the devoutneſs of our deportment *in*, the publick worſhip of God; and finally, in the activity and generoſity of our charity: or, to ſpeak my thoughts in the language of St. *Paul*, a ſtate of *zeal*, is that perfection or maturity of holineſs, which abounds in *the works of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope, in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſight of God, and our Father*, 1 *Theſſ.* i. 3. Now the end of all this is, the advancing the glory of God: and therefore *zeal* is well enough deſcribed or defined, by an ardent or vehement deſire of doing ſo. Now this is advanced two ways: *firſt*, by our *perſonal* and *inherent holineſs*: and, *ſecondly*, by the fruit of it,

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good works. Of both which I will now ſpeak a little more particularly.

§. 2. Of that *perfection of holineſs* which conſtitutes the ſtate of *zeal.* Here I will inquire into *two* things.

1. Whether the *perfect* man muſt be poſſeſſed of all the treaſures of goodneſs; whether he muſt be adorned by a confluence, and an accumulation of *all* virtues.

2. What *height* of virtue, what *degree* of holineſs, he may be ſuppoſed to arrive at.

1. Of the *extent* of righteouſneſs. It is generally thought that univerſality is as eſſential and neceſſary a property of goſpel-righteouſneſs, as ſincerity and perſeverance: that there is an inſeparable connexion and union between *all* Chriſtian virtues; ſo that he, who wants *any*, muſt be concluded to have *none:* this *want* being, not like a blemiſh that diminiſhes the beauty, or a maim that weakens the ſtrength; but like a wound that diſſolves the frame and contexture of the natural body. This opinion is partly built upon *reaſon,* which tells us, that there is a native luſtre and beauty in all virtues; and therefore there is no one in the whole ſyſtem of morality,

but muſt be lovely and amiable to a good man. Partly upon *ſcripture*, in which we find the Chriſtian repreſented, *as holy in all manner of converſation*, 1 Pet. i. 15. *Perfect in every good work*, Heb. xiii. 21. *As filled with all the fulneſs of God*, Eph. iii. 19. *As fruitful in every good work*, Col. i. 10. and exhorted, in the moſt comprehenſive terms imaginable, to the practice of *every* virtue. *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.* To which may be added numerous texts, importing, that faith is a principle of *univerſal* righteouſneſs; and that the fear and love of God do equally oblige us to *all* his commandments; and that the violation of *one* involves us in the guilt of *all*. And the reſult of all this ſeems to be plainly this, that the whole *chain* of graces is diſſolved and loſt, if there be but one *link* wanting. But at this rate, as the *ſincere* man muſt be endowed with *all* manner of virtues, ſo muſt the *perfect excell* in *all:* but the one and the other aſſertion, if we conſider things cloſely, ſeems to have in them inſuperable difficulties. There is a vaſt *variety* in the natures of men, in the ſtates and conditions

ditions of life, and in the kinds and degrees, as well of the ſanctifying, as of the miraculous gifts of God. St. *Paul* tells us, *every man has his proper gift of God*, 1 Cor. vii. 7. From whence it ſeems naturally to be inferred, that every man is not capable of attaining to an excellence and eminence in *every* virtue. Experience tells us, that there are different kinds of *natures*, as well as *ſoils*; and that ſome kinds of *virtues*, like ſome kinds of *ſeed*, will thrive better in *one* than *another*. Nor does *grace* alter the matter much; ſince it generally accommodates it ſelf to *nature*. Laſtly, it ſeems very hard, that every man ſhould have the virtues of all men, of all ſtates, of all capacities; every particular member, the virtues of the whole Church: the beauty and ſtrength of the church, as well as that of the natural body, or commonwealth, conſiſting, not in the all-ſufficiency of every member, but in that variety of gifts and graces, that cements and unites, enriches and ſupports the whole. To come to the matter of *fact*; I read of the *faith* of *Abraham*, the *meekneſs* of *Moſes*, the *patience* of *Job*, the *love* of *Mary Magdalen*, the *zeal* of St. *Paul*, and the *labours* and *travels* of St. *Peter*; which firmneſs and conſtancy is too mean a name for. Theſe virtues ſeem, therefore, to have been the *peculiar* excellencies of theſe perſons;

ſons; and to have ſhone in *them* with more tranſcendent luſtre, than any *other*: theſe ſeem to have been the virtues, for which grace and nature eminently qualified them; and to which the providence of God more immediately and directly called them. All this conſidered, ſeems it not enough to come up to the *perfection* of theſe great men? May it not ſuffice to excel in theſe virtues, which nature, grace, and providence preſcribed? May not the *perfect* be allowed to want what he does not need? Would not one think, that, in many reſpects, it were enough for him to be free from this or that vice, rather than to expect that he ſhould be adorned with this or that virtue, which he has no uſe for? eſpecially, if by virtue we underſtand ſtrictly, ſuch a habit as enables us to act eaſily and delightfully? To adjuſt this matter;

1. The *perfect* man muſt, as I have proved before, not only be ſet free from the dominion of ſin, but alſo abſtain even from a ſingle act of preſumptuous wickedneſs: he muſt neither criminally *omit* a duty, nor deliberately *commit* any thing repugnant to it.

2*dly*, He muſt be endowed with ſpiritual wiſdom and underſtanding, with faith,

hope, charity, with the graces which I will call *univerſal*, becauſe neceſſary and indiſpenſable to all as Chriſtians, abſtracting from their particular capacities and relations; and *that* too in an *eminent* degree, ſo as to be *ſtrong in the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. This will render him *holy in all manner of converſation, and thoroughly furniſhed to all good works*. Theſe two things conſtitute *univerſal* righteouſneſs, compleat the *perfect* man, and fully ſatisfy the texts alledged; or, if *not*, what follows *will*.

3*dly*, He muſt excel in thoſe virtues which are moſt *natural*. I call thoſe virtues *natural*, to which grace and nature moſt powerfully diſpoſe and incline him; for *theſe* he ſeems to be deſigned by God; theſe will ſoon grow up to maturity; and much will be their fruit, and great their beauty. I do not all this while ſuppoſe, that the *perfect* man ought not ſo far to ſubdue and rectify his temper, as not only to overcome the ſin of his *conſtitution*, but in ſome degrees poſſeſs the virtue that is moſt repugnant to it. But to expect him to be eminent *here*, is, I doubt, too hard and unreaſonable. For *here*, when he has beſtowed much pains and travel, much care and coſt, his progreſs may not be ſo much, as where he beſtowed *leaſt*. But here I

muſt add *two* cautions; the *one* is, that no man miſtake contracted *habits* for *nature*, and then conclude, that it will be impoſſible for him to attain the *perfection* of this or that virtue, through a natural incapacity. In the next place, let no man ſatisfy and content himſelf, in a weak and imperfect ſtate of *that* virtue, which is directly oppoſed to the ſin of his *conſtitution*; but let him think, that *here*, if any where, his virtue muſt be always *growing*; and let him not doubt, but that our Saviour's promiſe, as far as it can be accompliſhed on earth, belongs to his ſincere endeavours here; *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled*, Matth. v. 6.

4. The *perfect* man muſt be eminent in thoſe virtues, which are moſt *neceſſary*: ſuch are thoſe which his particular ſtation and calling, or any other diſpenſation of providence he is under, requires of him. Whatever virtues may be more *delightful*, theſe are more *important*; others may be more *natural*, theſe are more of *uſe* and more of *merit*. A man may fall ſhort of *perfection* in others, without either *diſparagement* or *guilt*; but deficiency in theſe can hardly eſcape *both*. Beſides, every thing is lovely in its *place*, and in its *time*. There is a *peculiar* grace and luſtre, that attends

attends the virtues of a man's *ſtation*, that is ſcarcely to be found in any other. I would, therefore, have my *perfect* man truly great in his *own* buſineſs, and ſhine with a dazling luſtre in his *own* ſphere. To this purpoſe, ſurely, ſpeaks the advice of St. *Paul*, Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. *Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us propheſy according to the proportion of faith: or miniſtry, let us wait on our miniſtring: or he that teacheth, on teaching: or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with ſimplicity: he that ruleth, with diligence: he that ſheweth mercy, with chearfulneſs.*

5. Laſtly, As there is different *guilt* in ſins, ſo there is different *merit* in virtues: as amongſt miraculous, ſo amongſt ſanctifying gifts, ſome are more *excellent* than others; and he is the *moſt perfect man*, who is enriched with the *moſt perfect gifts*. The three heroic virtues of the goſpel are *faith*, *love*, *humility*. Nor do I preſumptuouſly, contrary to the apoſtle, exclude *hope*; but comprehend it under *faith*. Of *faith* I have often had occaſion to ſpeak. *Humility* will make the *laſt* chapter of *this* ſection; and therefore I will only exhort to *love*. *Love* is the nobleſt fruit of illumination and faith, the true ſource and parent of

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joy and peace. *Love* is the moſt pregnant ſeed of a divine life; 'tis the principle that animates, moves, and forms the whole body of righteouſneſs: *love* is the bond of union and *communion with the Father, and his Son Jeſus* through the *Spirit*. And 'tis but fit, that what renders us moſt like to God, ſhould render us moſt *dear* to him too: and this *love* does; *for God is love*. In ſhort, *love is the fulfilling of the law*; 'tis the beauty and perfection of a diſciple of Jeſus, and the great ſubject of praiſe and glory in the day of judgment. *Love* is the laſt round in the ſcale of *Perfection*; and therefore my *perfect* man muſt abound in this. What degrees of *love*, of *deſire* or *complacency* for the things of this *preſent* life, may conſiſt with ſincerity, what with *Perfection*, may be eaſily learned from ſeveral parts of this work. There is no doubt but the *perfect* man muſt *love God* to that *degree*, that he muſt always cleave to him; walk as always before him; ever meditate and contemplate on him and his works; contrive and ſtudy, labour and contend to pleaſe him: it muſt be an affliction to him to be divided from him but for a little while; and he muſt, ever and anon, by day and night, break out into his praiſes, and rejoice and glory in him. 2. He muſt love God to that degree, as that all things,

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in compariſon of him, muſt appear blaſted and withered, empty and contemptible, without pleaſure, without beauty: and conſequently he muſt ſo thirſt after the *beatific viſion*, after the preſence and fruition of God, that he muſt earneſtly *deſire to be diſſolved*, and pant and long to be diſmiſſed from the *pilgrimage* of this *world*, and from the corruptible *tabernacle* of the *body*. Nor do I, laſtly, doubt, but that this *love* is often ſenſibly *tranſporting*: 'tis a fire within, that ſtrives to break out, and exert itſelf in the fruitions of heaven: 'tis a rich and mighty cordial that raiſes nature above itſelf, and makes it all purity or glory.

Thus have I conſidered the *extent* or compaſs of the *perfect* man's *virtues*. And the *ſum* total is: in ſome he muſt excel, becauſe natural and eaſy; in others, becauſe neceſſary. Univerſal ones he *cannot* want; they are eſſential to Chriſtianity; others of a peculiar nature he *may*, unleſs his circumſtances exact them: nor is this any diminution of his *perfection*. Patience, fortitude, moderation, vigilance, *&c.* are the virtues of earth, not heaven; and yet none think the bleſſed inhabitants of that place imperfect, becauſe not endowed with habits which they do not want. Above all,

all, he that will be *perfect*, muſt abound in thoſe graces which are of the moſt *heroic* nature; faith, love, and humility: for theſe are they, which moſt effectually exalt man above *himſelf*, and above the *world*; which enflame him with a *zeal* for the honour of God, and the good of man; and enable him to ſurmount the difficulties which he meets with in proſecuting this glorious deſign. I am next to enquire,

§. 2. To what *height*, to what *degrees* of virtue, the *perfect* man may advance. I have in part anticipated this enquiry already; yet cannot forbear adding here *two* obſervations. *Firſt*, That reaſon and ſcripture ſeem to preſs us on toward an endleſs progreſs in virtue. And yet, *ſecondly*, That both ſeem to propoſe to us ſuch a *ſtate* of *perfection* as attainable, beyond which we cannot go; that ſo the *beginner* may not *deſpair* of perfection, nor the *perfect abate* any thing of their vigilance, and their induſtry. Such a degree of excellence, to which nothing can be added; ſuch a height, above which there is no room to ſoar, if applied to man and this world, is ſurely but an imaginary notion. To dream of *ſuch a perfection*, were to forget our nature, and our ſtate: no ſaga-

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city of judgment, no ſtrength of reſolution, no felicity of circumſtances, can ever advance us to *this* height. Such a *perfection* as this, that is incapable of any increaſe, belongs, I believe, to *God* alone: or, if we may allow it to *angels*, we muſt certainly deny it to *man:* in *whom*, one would think, the appetites of the body can never be ſo entirely ſubdued, that there ſhould be no place to extend his conqueſt, or render his victory more entire and compleat: and in *whom*, one would think, the Spirit of God ſhould never reſide in that meaſure, that there ſhould be nothing to be added to his fulneſs. 'Tis hard to conceive, how we ſhould ſtudy the ſyſtem of divine faith, how we ſhould daily reflect upon our lives and actions, without *growing* in ſpiritual wiſdom and underſtanding: 'tis hard to conceive how we ſhould give God, the world, and our ſelves, repeated proofs of our integrity in the day of trial, without *increaſing* our ſtrength and aſſurance: and love muſt naturally increaſe with theſe. Whence it is, that St. *Paul*, acknowledging himſelf not yet *perfect*, reſolves, *that forgetting thoſe things that are behind, and reaching forward to thoſe things that are before, he would preſs on towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. And St. *Auſtin* reſolves, *Pleniſſima charitas, quamdiu*

diu hic homo vivit, in nemine eſt: An abſolute plenitude of charity is in no mortal upon earth.

And yet, if we come to *fact* and *practice*, one would be tempted to think, that the *diſciples* of our Lord and Maſter had arrived at that ſtate, wherein their buſineſs was not to climb higher, but rather to make good the ground they had gained. What could render St. *Paul*'s victory over the body more compleat, who aſſures us, *I am crucified with Chriſt?* And again, *I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me?* What could render the authority and dominion of *his* mind more abſolute, or its graces more conſummate and entire, who could ſay with truth, *'Tis not I who live, but Chriſt who lives in me?* What would you have *added* to that faith and love, which made *him* ready, *not only to be bound, but to die at Jeruſalem*, which made *him long to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt?* As to *thoſe* words of *his*, Phil. iii. 13. *forgetting thoſe things that are behind, and reaching forwards*, &c. *they* relate to his trials and performances, to his perils and conflicts; not to his attainments: he does not here deny himſelf to be *perfect*, though that might well enough have become his modeſty and humility; but only, that he was not to look upon himſelf as already at his goal, a conqueror and crowned;

ed; there being much yet behind to do and ſuffer, notwithſtanding all that he had paſſed through. This is the ſenſe of his οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη τετελείωμαι, which we render, *not as though I were already perfect*. As to St. *Auſtin*, I am wholly of his mind; for he ſpeaks *comparatively*, and does in effect no more than affirm, that no man living is as *perfect* in *this* world, as he will be in *another*, which no man ſure can ever doubt. —If we conſult *reaſon*, will it not be apt to tell us, that as every *being* has its *bounds* ſet it, ſo has every *perfection* too? That there is a *ſtature*, as of the *natural*, ſo of the *ſpiritual* man, beyond which it cannot grow? That as to *grace*, no more can be infuſed, than our *natures* are capable of? Otherwiſe, like too rich a cordial, it will not ſtrengthen, but fire our natures; or, like too dazling a light, it will not aſſiſt, but oppreſs our faculties. And does not the *parable* of our *Maſter* countenance this, *Matth.* xxv. 2. wherein he tells us, that God gave to one five talents, to another two, to another one, to every man according to his *ability*? By which one would think our Lord inſinuates, that the meaſures of *grace* are uſually diſtributed in *proportion* to the capacities of *nature*; and that *he*, who improved his *two* talents into *four*, arrived at his proper *perfection*, as well

well as *he*, who improved his *five* into *ten*; it being as abſurd to expect, that the *perfection* of every man ſhould be the ſame, as to expect, that all men's *bodies* ſhould be of the ſame height, or their *minds* of the ſame capacity.

Reflecting on all this together, I cannot but be of opinion, that ſome have actually arrived at that *ſtrength* of faith, at *that* ardour of love, that they ſeemed to have been incapable of any conſiderable *acceſſions* in this life. But yet new occaſions may ſtill demand new virtues; which were indeed before contained and included in faith and love; but no otherwiſe, than as fruits and trees are in their ſeeds. And ſome degree of original corruption may ſtill be lurking in the moſt ſanctified nature; and ſome venial defects and imperfections or other, may ſtill leave room for the greateſt of ſaints to extend his conqueſt. Beſides, 'tis hard to determine or fix the bounds of knowledge: and every new degree of light ſeems to make way for more. So that, after all, nothing hinders, but that the *path of the perfect man* may, as well with reſpect to his *righteouſneſs* as his *fortunes*, be *like the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*; I mean, the day of a bleſſed eternity.

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The *motives* to *perfection*, the *fruit* of it, the *means* and *methods* of attaining it, laid down in the *first* section, will all serve here: therefore I have nothing to offer of *this* sort; only, if I forgot to pay that deference to the *institutions* of *our church*, which they justly deserve, I do it *now:* and do earnestly persuade my *reader* to a strict observance of them. I do not only think *this* necessary to maintain a *face* of *religion* amongst us, but also highly conducive to true *perfection*. I am fully satisfied, that there is a *peculiar* presence of God in his *publick* ordinances; that the devotion of good men does mutually enflame and enkindle one another; that there is an holy awe and reverence seizes the minds of good men, when they draw near to God in publick worship; and finally, that if the *offices* of our *liturgy* do not affect our *hearts*, 'tis becaufe *they* are very much indispofed, and very poorly qualified for the true and spiritual worship of God.

CHAP. X.

Of Zeal, *as it consists in* Good Works. *That our own security demands a Zeal in these good works; so likewise do the* good *of our* neighbour, *and the* glory *of* God, *which are much promoted by good works.*

AND now let not any one think, that I have taken pains to advance the illumination of a sinner, to knock off his chains and fetters, to raise him as far as might be above the corruption of nature, and the defects and infirmities of life; to scatter those lazy fogs and mists which hung upon his spirits, and to enrich him with heroic virtues; let no man, I say, fancy that I have laboured to do all *this*, that after all, my *perfect man* might *sit down* like an *Epicurean God*, and enjoy himself; might talk finely of solitary shades and gardens, and spend a precious life, fitted for the noblest designs, in a sluggish retirement. No, no; as *virtue* is the perfection of human life, so is *action* the perfection of *virtue:* and *zeal* is that principle of *action*, which I require in a saint of God. Accordingly, the scriptures describe this great, this happy man, as *full of the Holy Ghost, fervent in spirit, zealous of good works.*

works. Such an one was *Moſes, mighty in word and deed,* as well as *learned in all the knowledge of the Egyptians:* ſuch an one was St. *Stephen,* as full of a divine ardour and irreſiſtible fervency of ſpirit, as of an irreſiſtible wiſdom; and ſuch an one was the excellent *Cornelius, a devout man,* one that had transfuſed and derived the fear of God from his own boſom, throughout his family, and relations, and friends too; *one that gave much alms, and prayed to God always.* What need I multiply inſtances? This is that which diſtinguiſhes the *perfect* man from all others; the victories of faith, the labours of charity, the conſtancy and patience of hope, and the ardors of devotion.

Need I here diſtinguiſh a *zeal* of God, from the fierceneſs of faction, the cruelty of ſuperſtition, from the wakeful and indefatigable activity of avarice and ambition, from the unruly heats of pride and paſſion, and from the implacable fury of revenge? It needs not; no fooliſh, no falſe, fantaſtick, earthly, or deviliſh principle can counterfeit a divine *zeal.* 'Tis a perfection that ſhines with ſuch a peculiar luſtre, with ſuch a heavenly majeſty and ſweetneſs, that nothing elſe can imitate it; 'tis always purſuing good, the honour of God, and the happineſs of man: it *contends earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the*

ſaints; but it contends as earneſtly too, to root out wickedneſs, and implant the righteouſneſs of the goſpel in the world. It is not eager for the *articles* of a *ſect* or *party*, and unconcerned for *catholick* ones. When it preſſes for *reformation*, it begins *at home*, and ſets a bright *example* of what it would recommend to others. 'Tis meek and gentle under its *own* affronts, but warm and bold againſt *thoſe* which are offered to *God*. In a word, though love fills its *ſails*, divine wiſdom and prudence give it *ballaſt*; and it has no heat, but what is tempered and refracted by charity and humility.

Need I, in the *next* place, fix or ſtate the various *degrees* of *zeal*? Alas! it is not requiſite; *zeal* being nothing elſe but an ardent thirſt of promoting the divine *glory* by the *beſt works*. 'Tis plain the more excellent the *work*, and the more it coſt, the more perfect, the more exalted the *zeal* that performs it. When, like *Mary*, we quit the cumber and diſtraction of this world, and chuſe religion for our portion, then do we love it in good earneſt. When with the *diſciples* we can ſay, *Lord, we have forſaken all and followed thee*, or are ready to do ſo; when we are continually bleſſing and praiſing God; when, if the neceſſities of Chriſt's church require it, we are ready

to

to call *nothing our own*; when we are prepared, if the will of God be ſo, to *reſiſt even unto blood*; when nothing is dear, nothing delightful to us, but God and holineſs; *then* have we reached the *height of zeal*. In a word, *zeal* is nothing elſe but the *love of God* made *perfect* in us. And if we would ſee it drawn to the life, we muſt contemplate it in the bleſſed *Jeſus*, who is the perfect pattern of heroick love. How *boundleſs* was *his love*, when the whole *world*, and how *tranſcendent* when a *world of enemies*, was the object of it! how indefatigable was *his zeal!* how wakeful! how meek! how humble! how firm and reſolved! His labours and travels, his ſelf denial, prayers and tears, his ſilence and patience, his agony and blood, and charitable prayers poured out with it for his perſecutors, inſtruct us fully, what divine *love*, what divine *zeal* is. And now, even at this time, *love* reigns in *him*, as *he* reigns in *heaven*: *love* is ſtill the predominant, the darling paſſion of *his* ſoul. Worthy art thou, O Jeſus! to receive honour, and glory, and dominion! worthy art thou to ſit down with thy Father on his throne: worthy art thou to judge the world, becauſe thou haſt *loved*, becauſe thou haſt been *zealous* unto death, becauſe thou haſt *overcome!* Some there are in-

deed, who have *followed* thy bright example, though at a great diſtance. Firſt, martyrs and confeſſors: next, thoſe beloved and admired princes, who have governed their kingdoms in righteouſneſs; to whom the honour of God, and the good of the world, has been far dearer than pleaſure, than empire, than abſolute power, or that ominous blaze that is now called glory. And next follow,——Hold! this is the work of angels; they muſt marſhal the field of glory in the end of all things. O my God, may I at leaſt be one, to fill the train of this triumphant proceſſion of that bleſſed day, when thou ſhalt crown the zeal and patience of thy ſaints! Thus have I given a ſhort account of *zeal*. I will now endeavour to kindle it in every breaſt by ſome few conſiderations; which will at once evince the *neceſſity*, and declare the *fruit* of it.

1. Our *own* ſecurity and happineſs demand of us *zeal* fruitful in *good works*.

2. It is indiſpenſable to the welfare and good of our *neighbour*.

3. It miniſters moſt effectually to the *glory of God*.

1. Our *own* ſalvation and happineſs depend upon it. For without *this* we reject, or

or at leaſt fruſtrate the *councils of God againſt our own ſouls*; 'twas for this Chriſt died, that *he might purify to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works.* This is the great end of our *election*; *God hath choſen us in Chriſt before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love*, Eph. i. 4. which is to be explained by *Eph.* ii. 10. where God is ſaid to have *before ordained that we ſhould walk in good works.* And the beginning of the *verſe* minds us, that 'tis for this end God imparts the light of his Word, and the vigour of his Spirit; and for *this* end he ſanctifies and renews our nature: *We are his workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works.* St. *Peter* tells us, that this is that which all the great and precious promiſes of God immediately aim at: firſt godlineſs, then life; firſt virtue, then glory. What ſhall I ſay more? Our *Lord* in his narrative of the laſt judgment, and elſewhere; and his *apoſtles*, in almoſt innumerable places, have with great power and great earneſtneſs, inculcated *this* doctrine, that we ſhall *be judged according to our works:* that immortality and glory is the portion, not of knowledge, but patience and charity; not of an orthodox belief and ſpecious pretenſion, but of righteouſneſs and zeal: for the *incorruptible*,

the *never-fading crown, is a crown of righteousness.* Or, if men will be judged by their *faith*, which is not the language of the *gospel*, this does not alter the matter at all; since *faith* itself will be judged by its *works*. And as a happy *eternity* depends upon our *zeal*; so nothing else can give us any comfortable, any rational assurance of it in *this* life. The reason is plain; because 'tis *zeal* that is the only unquestionable proof of our integrity; and *good works* are the fruit which alone can evidence the life and truth of our *faith* and *love*; *hereby we know, that we know him, if we keep his commandments*, 1 John ii. 3. *Yea a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works*, James ii. 8. Dost thou believe in *God?* Why art thou not *holy as he is holy?* Dost thou believe in *Jesus?* Why dost thou not *deny thy self, take up thy cross and follow him?* Why dost thou not walk as he walked? Dost thou believe a judgment to come? Why dost thou not *work out thy salvation with fear and trembling?* Why dost thou not *prepare to meet thy God?* Why art thou not *rich in good works*, that thou mayest *lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold on eternal life?* Nor are *good works* less necessary

ceſſary to prove our *love*, than *faith*. Certainly, if we love holineſs, if we *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*, we ſhall never live in a direct contradiction to the ſtrongeſt paſſions of our ſoul; we ſhall never refuſe to gratify an inclination, which is not only fervent in us, but its gratification will procure us eternal rewards too. Certainly, if we *love God*, we cannot but ſeek his glory; we cannot but be deſirous to maintain communion with him. And if ſo, do we know any *ſacrifice* that is more acceptable to *God* than *good works*? Do we know any that he delights in more than *zeal*? Do we *love* the *bleſſed Jeſus*? Are not *good works* the very teſt of this love which himſelf has appointed? *If a man love me, he will keep my commandments*, John xiv. 15. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you*, John xv. 14. *The love of Chriſt*, ſaith the apoſtle, *conſtrains us* what to do, *to live not to our ſelves, but to him that died for us, and roſe again*, 2 Cor. v. 15. What other returns can we make to Jeſus? What other way can we expreſs our gratitude to him? He ſits on the right hand of God; *all power is given him in heaven and in earth*: he does not himſelf need our miniſtry, nor want our ſervice and charity; but hear what he ſays, *Inaſmuch as you did it to one of theſe my little ones, you have done it to me*, Matt. xxv. 40.

2. Our

2. Our *zeal* is indispensably necessary to the welfare and happiness of *others*. Do we regard our neighbour's eternal interest? 'Tis *zeal* represses sin, and propagates righteousness; 'tis *zeal* defends the faith, and suppresses heresy and error; 'tis *zeal* converts the unbeliever, and builds up the believer; 'tis *zeal* that awakens the drowsy, quickens the lukewarm, strengthens the weak, and inflames the good with a holy emulation: 'tis *zeal* that baffles all objections, refutes all calumnies, and vanquishes all oppositions raised against religion, and oppresses its enemies with shame and confusion. 'Tis, in a word, *zeal*, and *zeal* alone, that can make religion appear lovely and delightful, and reconcile the world to it; for this alone can *adorn the gospel*; for it renders virtue more conspicuous, more taking in life and example than it can be in the precepts and descriptions of words. Nor is *zeal* less serviceable to the *temporal*, than *eternal* interest of mankind. When God laid the foundation of the *world*, he laid the foundation of *virtue* too; and when he formed *man*, he wove the necessity of *good works* into his very *nature*. How necessary is *justice* to poor creatures who lie so open to wrongs and injuries? How indispensable is *charity*, or *generosity*, to these, who are exposed to so many accidents,

dents, to ſo many wants, to ſuch a viciſſitude of fortune? And being all ſubject to ſo many follies and infirmities, to ſo many miſtakes and fancies, how ſtrong muſt be our obligation to mutual *forbearance*, *patience*, and *gentleneſs*? In a word, *ſin* and *miſery* abounds in the world; and if there were not virtues and good works to ballance the *one*, and to relieve and ſupport us under the *other*, life would be intolerable. So that revealed and natural religion do neceſſarily terminate and center in a *zeal* for good works, as their ultimate end, and utmoſt perfection in this life; and the rule of our Saviour, *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo unto them*, is an abſtract, not only of the law and the prophets, but of the code of nature too; and this ſingle principle, if ſincerely purſued, will ferment and work us up to the nobleſt heights of *zeal*. I might here, if it were neceſſary, eaſily ſhew that *zeal* has as happy an influence on the *publick* as the *private*; that *this* muſt animate that juſtice and mercy that ſupports the throne; that it is the ſoul of that honour, integrity, generoſity and religion, which ſupport the ſtates and kingdoms of the world; and without which all politick ſyſtems muſt needs tend to a diſſolution. But I have ſaid enough; and from what I

have

have ſaid, the truth of my *third* conſideration naturally appears.

3. *Viz.* That *zeal* miniſters moſt effectually to the glory of God. For if *zeal* be in itſelf thus lovely, thus neceſſary; if the fruits and effects of it be thus ſerviceable to the temporal and eternal intereſt of man; what a lovely, what an agreeable notion of God ſhall we form from this one conſideration of him, that he is the great Author of it? that he is the Origin and Fountain of that light and heat, of that ſtrength and power of which it is compounded and conſtituted? He commands and exacts it; he excites and encourages to it by the promiſe of an eternal crown, and the raviſhing fruition of himſelf: he has planted the ſeeds of it in our nature, and he cheriſhes them by the bleſſed and vigorous influences of his Word and Spirit. How gracious is the divine *Nature!* how gracious is the divine *Government!* when the ſubſtance of his laws is, that we ſhould love as brethren, that we ſhould cloath the naked, feed the hungry, deliver the captive, inſtruct the fooliſh, comfort the afflicted, forgive one another, if need be, ſeven times a day; and ſuch like. If to do all this be an argument of being *regenerate*, and *born of God*; if this be a proof of his Spirit ruling in us, his Nature communicated

municated to us, and his image ſtamped upon us, how amiable muſt *God* be when *we* diſcern ſo much benefit, and ſo much pleaſure, and ſo much beauty, and ſo much lovelineſs in thoſe qualities which are but faint and imperfect reſemblances of him! In a word, the *holineſs* of *his* children and ſervants, is a demonſtration of the *holineſs* of *God* himſelf; and in this conſiſts the very luſtre of divine glory. Holineſs is the flower of all his attributes; the moſt *perfect*, becauſe the moſt *comprehenſive* of all his divine perfections; for *holineſs* includes *wiſdom*, *power*, and *goodneſs*. As to *goodneſs*, the caſe is ſo plain, that *holineſs* and *goodneſs* are commonly uſed as terms equivalent. As to *wiſdom*, 'tis evident, that no action is commendable and lovely, whatever the matter of it be, unleſs the principle, the motive of it be *wiſe* and *rational*; therefore *wiſdom* cannot be ſeparated from the notion of holineſs. Laſtly, As to *power*, this muſt needs be compriſed in it too; for *beneficence*, which is at leaſt one great branch of *holineſs*, muſt unavoidably imply *power* in the *benefactor*, and *impotence* and *want* in the *beneficiary*. And this is the notion wherein *holineſs*, when aſcribed to God in ſcripture, is generally taken. *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hoſts; heaven and earth are full of thy glory*, does expreſs the greatneſs and majeſty, as well

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as the rectitude and purity of the divine nature; and to *sanctify the Lord God in our hearts*, is, in the language of the scripture, not only to love him for his goodness, but revere and fear him for his majesty and greatness. Need I here add, that the excellencies of the *creature*, their fitness and subserviency to the great ends of their creation, is the glory of the *Creator*; just as the beauty, strength, and convenience of the *work*, is the honour of the *architect*? If the sun, moon, and stars, the irrational and inanimate parts of the creation, shew forth the glory of God; how much more do spiritual and rational beings? And *virtue* is the perfection of *reason*, and *zeal of virtue*: for this is that which does directly and immediately advance those great ends that are dearest to God, as I have, I think, abundantly made out.

CHAP. XI.

Of Humility. *How necessary it is to* Perfection.

OUR Saviour has so often pronounced the *humblest*, the *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven; he has so often promised the *first* place and the *greatest* exaltation

tation to the *loweſt* condeſcenſions: he was himſelf ſo illuſtrious an example of *lowlineſs of heart*, of *poverty of ſpirit*; and the apoſtle has ſo expreſly aſſerted his *joy and crown*, to be the reward of his *humility*, *Phil.* ii. that I can never think, that man can ever riſe to a more eminent height, than *that* to which the imitation of this virtue of Chriſt will advance him. The more *perfect* therefore man is, the more *humble* muſt he be too: the clearer view, and the more aſſured hope he has of heaven, the more unconcerned muſt he be for all thoſe things which the world pays a reſpect and honour to, the more he muſt be above them: the more fervent his love of God and his neighbour grows, the more confidently muſt he place all his glory in this one thing; the conformity of his affections and life to that of the bleſſed Jeſus. Then is he *perfect*, and *the ſame mind is in him that was in Chriſt Jeſus*. Finally, The more he *knows* God, the nearer he is admitted into *communion* with him; the more plainly will he diſcern at how infinite diſtance he ſtands from the divine Majeſty and purity, and will proſtrate himſelf even into *duſt and aſhes before him*. The *perfect* man admires, adores, obeys, loves, relies, truſts, and reſigns up himſelf, and all that is dear to him, to God. He is nothing in his own eyes; he pretends to nothing, he lays claim

claim to nothing, on any other title than that of the goodneſs and bounty of God: whatever virtues he has, he aſcribes them to the grace of God; and the glory and immortality he expects, he expects only as the *gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And whatever he be in *himſelf*, he compares not himſelf with *others*, but he proves his *own* work, that *he* may *have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another.* Nothing but *zeal* for God, or *charity* for man, can put him upon the aſſerting his own merit or ſervice; but when he glories, it is, like St. *Paul*, in his *infirmities*, that *the power of Chriſt may reſt upon him.*

Need I here inſiſt on the *fruit* of humility? Surely 'tis conſpicuous to every one that thinks at all. Great is the peace and reſt of the *humble* ſoul *here*; and great will be his glory *hereafter.* He who loves not the world, nor the things of it, *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*, enjoys a perpetual calm and ſerenity of mind. There is no object that can raiſe any ſtorm in him; there is nothing that can breed in him uneaſy deſires and fears. He, that loves the *Father*, is fixed on an immutable and perfect good; and he that *now* quits all for God, ſhall *one day* participate of the fulneſs of God, and that for ever.

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Need I invite and exhort man to *humility*? Need I guard him againſt ſpiritual *pride*? One would think 'twere altogether uſeleſs to attempt it. Is it poſſible, that the *creature* ſhould think himſelf ſo independent of his *Creator*, that he ſhould be able to pay him more ſervice than were due to him? Is it poſſible, that man ſhould ſet ſuch a rate upon his own righteouſneſs, as to think it capable of deſerving the utmoſt rewards that an infinite God can beſtow upon him? Is it poſſible, in a word, that *man*, poor, frail, ſinful *man*; *man*, that can do nothing that is good, but by the aſſiſtance of divine *grace*; *man*, depraved and corrupted in his *nature*, and but a very ill huſband of *grace*; is it poſſible, I ſay, that *man* ſhould be *proud* towards *God*, towards that glorious and incomprehenſible Being, who is the Creator and Lord, the Monarch, and Patron, the God and Father of heaven and earth? But as abſurd as this is, univerſal experience teaches us, that *humility*, true *humility* is a hard leſſon; and that very excellent perſons are not out of the danger of falling into vicious elations of mind. In order therefore to promote the one, and ſecure us againſt the other, I will propoſe theſe two or three conſiderations.

1. There never was mere man yet, that did not fall ſhort of his duty.

2. *Man* is the creature of *God*, depends upon him, and has received all from him: and therefore let him do the utmoſt he can, he does no more than his *duty*.

3. God ſtands in no need of our ſervice: and 'tis our *own*, not *his* intereſt we promote by it.

1. There never was mere man yet, *&c.* For proof of this, I will not fly to original corruption, or ſins of infirmity. Alas! I need not. The apoſtle, *Rom.* i. and ii. and iii. *ch.* lays the foundation of juſtification by faith, in the univerſal defection and depravation of mankind. *They are altogether gone out of the way, there is none that doth good, no not one.* And what *ſins* he there charges the world with, the *catalogue* he gives us of them will inform us. But are *we* no better than *they?* I anſwer, the light of the goſpel, and the preventing grace of God has undoubtedly given a great check to the progreſs of ſin in the world: but ſince no *man* can be juſtified, but through faith in the blood of Jeſus, 'tis plain that *we* too muſt be concluded under ſin. And tho' *our* ſins may not in the number or ſcandal equal *theirs*; yet

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we ought to remember too, that every ſin is the more provoking, the more voluntary it is, and the greater the grace is which it reſiſts and deſpiſes. But what need I compare our ſelves with the *Jew* or *Gentile*? What need I prove by argument and authority, that no man ever yet lived, or will live, without ſin? I mean mortal ſin. Whoever yet looked back diligently into his paſt life, and did not meet with ſtains and deformities enough? When I conſider what legions of ſins are ranged under thoſe two banners of the devil, the filthineſs of the *fleſh*, and of the *ſpirit*; when I call to mind envy, diſcontent, murmuring, diſtruſt, pride, covetouſneſs, ambition, wilfulneſs, contention, frowardneſs, paſſion, diſſimulation, falſhood, flattery, and a thouſand other ſins; and when I reflect upon the weakneſſes and propenſions of nature, and the almoſt innumerable temptations to which we are expoſed, I muſt confeſs I am not at all ſurpriſed to think, that no fleſh can be juſtified in the ſight of God by a covenant of works: and when ever I find any upon a death-bed, as I do ſome, acquitting themſelves from the guilt of any deliberate wickedneſs, I rather admire their ignorance and partiality, than their innocence. And yet, after all, a good man is not to examine himſelf only

concerning the evil that he has done, but alſo concerning the good which he has omitted. He muſt inquire, how far he has fallen ſhort of that poverty of ſpirit, and purity of heart, which he ought to have come up to, and how far he has been wanting in thoſe duties which a thorough zeal would have puſhed him on to. And when he has done this, let him be proud if he can.

2. *Man* is the creature of *God*, depends upon him, and has received all from him. And therefore let him do the utmoſt he can, he does no more than his duty; and ſtrictly ſpeaking, cannot *merit* of *him*. He that will pretend to *merit*, muſt be his own maſter; he muſt have a right over his own actions; he muſt be free to diſpoſe of his affections and ſervices as he pleaſes. For, if he be antecedently bound, if he hath no liberty, no freedom, no right to diſpoſe of himſelf, or any thing he is poſſeſſed of, 'tis plain ſuch an one cannot *merit*. And this is the direct caſe between *God* and *man*. God is the great Lord, the great Proprietor of heaven and earth. He that gives alms, does but reſtore a part of what God lent him: he that takes patiently the loſs of goods, or health, or friends, does but give back what he had no right to retain: he was but tenant at will, and had no right to

to any thing longer than God thought fit to continue it. And in all other inſtances of duty the caſe will ſtill be plainer. If he adore and worſhip God, there is infinite reaſon that he ſhould; for he depends upon him for his being and preſervation. If he love God never ſo much, God has deſerved much more than he can pay him: not only the enjoyments of life, but even life it ſelf, being derived from him. From this argument it will follow, that it is impoſſible for a *creature* to *merit* of its *Creator: angels* themſelves never could. For might it not be ſaid with as much truth concerning them, as concerning man, *Who made thee to differ? Or what haſt thou which thou didſt not receive? And if thou haſt received it, why doſt thou boaſt as if thou hadſt not received it?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. And the ſame may be concluded concerning *Adam* in *Paradiſe*. For I demand, had he kept the covenant of God, had he done this by divine *grace*, or by his *own* ſtrength? If by the *grace* of God, as divines generally hold, then may we apply the expreſſion of St. *Auſtin* to *Adam*, as well as to any one now under the diſpenſation of the *goſpel*: that *when God rewards the works of man, he does only crown in him his own gifts*. But ſuppoſe he had done this by his *own* natural ſtrength: were not the endowments

of *nature*, as much the gifts of *God*, as the endowments of *grace*? The one were *natural*, the other *ſupernatural* gifts: both *gifts* ſtill, tho' of a different kind. If it be here *objected*, If this be ſo, how comes St. *Paul* to affirm, *To him that worketh is the reward due, not of grace but of debt*? Rom. iv. 4. I *anſwer*, *firſt*, God ſeems, when he enters into covenant with man, to ſuſpend, or lay aſide the natural right which he has over him as his creature; and to tranſact with him, as free, and maſter of himſelf: but this is all infinite condeſcenſion. *Secondly*, It ſeems unſuitable to the infinite goodneſs of God, to bereave man of the life and happineſs he has once conferred upon him, unleſs he forfeits it by ſome demerit: *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance*; nor can I think how *death*, which has ſo much evil in it, could have entered the world, if *ſin* had not entered it firſt. In this ſenſe, *unſinning* obedience gives a kind of *right* to the *continuance* of thoſe good things, which are at *firſt* the mere effects of divine grace and bounty. *Laſtly*, A covenant of works being once eſtabliſhed, 'tis plain, that as ſin *forfeits* life, ſo obedience muſt give a *right* to it: and as the penitent could not be reſtored, but by an act of grace, ſo he that commits no ſin, would need no pardon.

But then life it ſelf, and an ability to work righteouſneſs, muſt be owing to grace antecedent to the *covenant:* and ſo ſuch an one would have whereof to *boaſt* comparatively, with reſpect to *others* who fell; but not before *God.* The ſum of all is, *man* has nothing to render to *God,* but what he has received from him; and therefore can offer him nothing but his *own:* which is no very good foundation for merit. But ſuppoſe him abſolute maſter of himſelf; ſuppoſe him holding all things independent of God. Can the ſervice of a few days merit immortality and glory, angelical perfection, and a crown? He muſt be made up of vanity and preſumption, that dares affirm *this.*

3. God ſtands in no need of our ſervice; and 'tis our *own,* not his intereſt we promote by it. The foundation of merit amongſt *men* is *impotence* and *want:* the prince wants the ſervice and tribute of the ſubject; the ſubject, the protection of the prince: the rich needs the miniſtry, and the labour of the poor; the poor, ſupport and maintenance from the rich. And it is thus in imaginary, as well as real wants. The luxury and pleaſure of one, muſt be provided for and ſupported by the care and vigilance of others: and the pomp and the

pride of one part of the world cannot ſubſiſt, but on the ſervitude of the other. In theſe caſes therefore, mutual *wants* create mutual rights, and mutual merit. But this is not the caſe between *God* and *man*. *God* is not ſubject to any wants or neceſſities; nor is his glory or happineſs capable of diminution or increaſe. *He* is a Monarch, that needs no tribute to ſupport his grandeur, nor any ſtrength or power beſides his own, to guard his throne. If *we* revolt, or rebel, we cannot injure *him*: if *we* be loyal and obedient, we cannot profit *him*. He has all fulneſs, all perfection in himſelf: he is an almighty and all-ſufficient God. But on the quite contrary, tho' God have no *wants*, *we* have many: and tho' *his* Majeſty and felicity be ſubject to no viciſſitude, *we* are ſubject to many. Our ſervice to *God* therefore is our *own* intereſt; and our obedience is deſigned to procure our *own* advantage: we need, we daily need his ſupport and protection; we depend intirely on his favour and patronage: *In him we live, and move, and have our being*: and from *him*, as from an inexhauſtible fountain, we derive all the ſtreams of good, by which we are refreſhed and improved. To know and love him, is our wiſdom; to depend upon him, our happineſs and ſecurity; to ſerve and worſhip him,

him, our perfection and liberty; to enjoy him will be our heaven; and those glimpses of his presence, which we are vouchsafed through the Spirit in this life, are the pledges and foretaste of it. This is the constant voice of scripture. *Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,* Jam. i. 17. *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most high: and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,* Psal. l. 12, 13, &c. *If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou unto him? Thy wickedness may hurt a man, as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man,* Job xxxv. 7, 8.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of the Impediments *of* Perfection. *Five Impediments reckoned up, and inſiſted on. 1. Too looſe a notion of religion. 2. An opinion that Perfection is not attainable. 3. That religion is an enemy to pleaſure. 4. The love of the world. 5. The infirmity of the fleſh. The whole concluded with a prayer.*

THO' I have been all along carrying on the *deſign* of this *ſection*, that is, the removing the obſtacles of *Perfection*; yet I eaſily foreſaw there might be *ſome* which would not be reduced within the compaſs of the foregoing *heads*: for *theſe* therefore I reſerved this place; theſe are *five*.

§. 1. Some ſeem to have entertained ſuch a *notion of religion*, as if moderation here were as neceſſary as any where elſe. They look upon *zeal* as an *exceſs* of righteouſneſs; and can be well enough content to want degrees of glory, if they can but ſave their ſouls. To which end they can ſee no neceſſity of *Perfection*. Now I would beſeech ſuch ſeriouſly to lay to heart, that ſalvation and damnation are things of no *common* importance: and there-

therefore it highly concerns them not to be miſtaken in the *notion* they form to themſelves of *religion*. For the nature of things will not be altered by their fancies; nor will God be mocked or impoſed on. If we will deal ſincerely with our ſelves, as in this caſe it certainly behoves us to do, we muſt frame our *idea* of *religion*, not from the opinions, the manners, or the faſhions of the *world*; but from the *ſcriptures*. And we muſt not interpret *theſe* by our own inclinations; but we muſt judge of the duties they preſcribe, by thoſe deſcriptions of them, by thoſe properties and effects, which we find there. We muſt weigh the *deſign* and *end* of religion; which is to promote the glory of God, and the good of man, and to raiſe us above the world, and the body: and ſee how our platform, or model of religion, *ſuits* with it. And if, after we have done this, we are not fully ſatisfied in the true bounds and limits which part vice and virtue, it cannot but be ſafeſt for us to err on the right hand. We ought always to remember too, that the repeated exhortations in ſcripture to diligence, and that the moſt earneſt and indefatigable ones to vigilance, to *fear and trembling*, to patience, to ſtedfaſtneſs, and ſuch like, are utterly inconſiſtent with an eaſy, lazy, gentile religion; that

that the *life* of *Jesus* is the fairest and fullest comment on his *doctrine:* and, that we never are to follow the examples of a corrupt world, but of the best men, and the best ages. This, this one thing alone, will convince us, *what* endeavours, *what* virtues are necessary to gain an incorruptible crown. See with what eagerness the *disciples of Jesus pressed towards the mark!* see with what courage, nay joy too, they *took up their cross, and followed him!* how generous were their *alms!* so that the *riches of their liberality* were conspicuous in the very *depth of their poverty.* What plainness and singleness of heart; what grace and warmth, what peace and joy shewed itself in their conversation! what modesty, what humility in their garb, deportment, and the whole train of life! how frequent, how fervent, and how long too were their prayers and retirements! In one word, the spirit and genius of a disciple of Christ discovered itself in all they said and did: and the virtues of their *lives* did as evidently distinguish a *Christian* from a *Jew* or *Pagan,* as their *faith.* How lovely was religion *then!* how full its joy, how strong its confidence! *Then* did Christians truly overcome the world: *then* did they live above the body: *then* was the cross of Christ more delightful than

than the eaſe or honour, the pride or pleaſure, of a ſinful life: *then* did they truly, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith. Let us now compare *our* lives with *theirs*, and then ſit down content with poor and beggarly attainments if we can. Let us put *our* virtues in the ſcales againſt *theirs*; and, if we have any modeſty, the inequality will put us out of countenance: we ſhall bluſh at our vanity, and ſhall not have the confidence to expect the ſame crown, the ſame kingdom with them. But as too lax a notion of religion is apt to beget too much indifference and unconcernment; ſo will it be ſaid, too exalted an one is apt to beget *deſpair:* which is a *ſecond* and no *leſs obſtacle* of *Perfection.*

§. 2. Many there are, who, forming their judgment upon the ſlips and defects of good men, and the corruption of human nature, conceive *Perfection* to be a mere imaginary notion. They believe indeed, that, conſidering how apt man is to fall ſhort of his duty, 'tis very fit that the rule preſcribed him ſhould be exact; and that he ſhould be frequently preſſed, and exhorted to *Perfection:* but that the thing it *ſelf* is too difficult for mortal man to attain in this life. But to this *objection* I muſt

muſt oppoſe *theſe* few things, which I believe will be ſufficient to remove it.

1. The *beginning* of virtue is the moſt difficult part of it; the nearer we approach to *Perfection*, the eaſier, as well as pleaſanter, is religion. And therefore, whoever ſtartles at the difficulties which lie in the way to an exalted virtue, has as much reaſon to be ſtartled at thoſe which will encounter him in his firſt entrance upon religion: and yet *theſe* muſt be conquered. 2. The avoiding the difficulties of religion, does but plunge us into worſe. We are neceſſarily under this *dilemma:* if we will attain the peace and tranquillity of the *mind*, we muſt mortify and reduce the appetites of the *body:* if, on the other hand, we propoſe to gratify the appetites of the *body*, and enjoy the pleaſure of *ſin*, we cannot do ſo without offering much violence to the *mind*. And if this be ſo; if ſuch be the war and oppoſition between the ſoul and the body, that there is no way to a true and well-ſettled peace and pleaſure, but by the reduction and mortification of the one or the other; *then* it will be eaſy to reſolve what we are to do. For thoſe appeals which atheiſts themſelves make to reaſon, proclaim the *ſoul* of man to be the ruling and nobler part of him. Beſides, the ſoul is the more vital, the more tender and ſenſible part of us: and conſequently the affliction

fliction of *this* muſt render us far more miſerable, than any hardſhips or difficulties virtue can impoſe upon the *body*. 3. Whatever be the difficulties of *virtue*, they will ſoon vaniſh, if we often call to mind, that peace and joy are the *fruit of virtue*; but ſhame and remorſe, of *ſin*: that no man ever yet repented of his reſiſting and conquering his luſts; but no man ever yet did not repent of following them; unleſs he *died* as much a brute as he *lived*: that heaven is a cheap purchaſe, whatever it coſts us; but the pleaſure of ſin a very dear one, how eaſily ſoever we come by it: and finally, that we are not our own maſters: there is a God to whom we ſtand accountable for our actions: and conſequently, whether we will, or will not, we muſt either undergo the hardſhip and diſcipline of virtue, or the eternal plagues and puniſhments of ſin. Laſtly, The truth is, this opinion of the *impoſſibility of Perfection*, has both been begot and cheriſhed by thoſe wild *ſchemes* of it, which have been drawn by the hands of a flaming, indeed, but an indiſcreet zeal. But I have here recommended to the world, no fantaſtick, or enthuſiaſtick *Perfection*. I have advanced no heights of virtue, but what many do, I hope, at this day, actually feel and experiment in themſelves: none, I am ſure, but what the *followers* of the bleſſed *Jeſus* actually attained and practiſed,

ſed. *Be ye followers of us,* ſaid the apoſtle, *as we are of Chriſt. Their* lives were as bright a rule as their doctrine: and by their own actions they demonſtrated the power of the faith they taught. They did not, like the *Scribes* and *Phariſees, bind heavy burdens upon others, and not move them with their finger*; they did not, like *Plato* and *Ariſtotle,* magnify temperance and modeſty at the tabernacles and carnavals of princes; nor commend the pleaſure of wiſdom in the gardens of *Epicurus:* but they *lived* as they *taught,* unſpotted by the pleaſures, unbroken by the troubles of the world; modeſt, ſerene, equal and heavenly minded, in honour or diſhonour, want or abundance, liberty or priſon, life or death. Let us then no longer *object* or *diſpute,* but with faith and patience be followers of thoſe who have inherited the promiſes: being *incompaſſed with a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us; and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith; who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God. For conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf; leſt ye be wearied and faint in your mind,* Heb. xii.

xii. 1, 2. I have done with thoſe, who endeavour to *ſoften* or *ſhun* the difficulties of religion, not to *conquer* them.

§. 3. There are *others*, who will look upon this ſetting up the doctrine of *Perfection*, as a deſign againſt the *pleaſures* of mankind. What, ſays ſuch a one, ſhall I let go my preſent *pleaſures* out of my hands, to hunt after I know not what, and I know not where? Shall I quit *pleaſures* that are every-where obvious, for ſuch as have no being, it may be, but in ſpeculation? or at leaſt, are never to be enjoyed by any, but ſome few rare and happy creatures, the favourites of God and nature? *Pleaſures*, that have matter and ſubſtance in them, for ſuch as I can no more graſp and reliſh than I can dreams and viſions? But to this I anſwer, This pretty talk is all but ſtupid ignorance and groſs miſtakes. For, 1. As to innocent and virtuous *pleaſure*, no man needs part with it. I endeavour not to deprive man of *this*; but to refine and purify it. And he that prefers either ſilly, or vicious *pleaſure* before religion, is wretchedly miſtaken. For, 2. *Perfect* religion is full of *pleaſure*. Had we but once arrived at true purity of heart, what could be ſo full of *pleaſure* as the buſineſs of religion? What can be more delightful,

than bleſſing and praiſing God, to a grateful ſoul; *Allelujahs*, to a ſoul ſnatched from the brink of deſtruction, into the boſom of its Maſter? What can be more tranſporting than the melting tenderneſſes of a holy contrition, made up, like *Mary Magdalen*'s, of tears and kiſſes, ſorrow and love, humility and glory, confuſion and confidence, ſhame and joy? What can be more tranſporting than love, the love of a Chriſtian, when he is all *love, as God is love*; when he *deſires nothing in heaven, nor in earth, but God*; when *all things are dung and droſs to him in compariſon of Jeſus*? 4. If the *pleaſures* of the *world* be more tranſporting than thoſe of *religion*, 'tis becauſe our faith is weak, our love imperfect, and our life unſteady. A conſtant and exalted *pleaſure* is, I grant it, the fruit of *Perfection* alone. The *peace and joy* of the Holy Ghoſt reigns no-where, but where that *zeal and love*, which is an effect of the fulneſs of the Spirit, reigns too. I had once propoſed to have inſiſted on the reaſons of this here; but this labour is prevented, for they are very obvious to any one who hath read the *chapter* of *Zeal* with ſeriouſneſs and attention. Laſtly, What is inſinuated in the *objection*, that the *pleaſures* of the *world* are more numerous, or obvious, than thoſe of *religion*, is altogether a falſe

borious; for if the *world* be once crucified to him, *he* will the more eaſily bear the being crucified to *it*.

§. 5. After all, there is an *Infirmity* in the *fleſh*, againſt which if we do not guard our ſelves, if we do not ſtruggle heartily, we ſhall *miſcarry*. *The ſpirit is willing*, ſaid our Saviour, *but the fleſh is weak*. Without much care, and much watchfulneſs, the vigour of our minds will be relaxed; the exultation of our ſpirits will flag and droop; and we ſhall ſoon loſe the reliſh there is in religion. The more effectual *remedies* againſt this frailty and fickleneſs of our nature, are *two*: *Firſt*, Godly *fear*; and *this*, the purity and preſence of God, the ſtrictneſs and the impartiality of a judgment to come, the loſs of an eternal crown, the terrors of eternal puniſhment, the number and ſtrength of temptations, the deplorable falls of the greateſt ſaints, and the conſcience of our own weakneſs, will not fail to work in us. Let us then, not only *begin*, but alſo *perfect holineſs in the fear of God*. *Bleſſed is he that feareth always*. *Secondly*, The ſtedfaſtneſs of *hope*; of hope, that waits and longs for the coming of our Lord. *This* will invite us often to take a view of *Canaan*; *this* will fill the mind often with the beauties and the glories of eternity; *this*

this will often call to our thoughts, the ſecurity, the reſt, the tranſports of another world, the love of God and of Jeſus, incorruptible crowns, the hallelujahs of angels, the ſhouts of victory, the fruit of the tree of life, the ſtreams that water the paradiſe of God. And every ſuch object will chide us out of our weakneſs and cowardiſe; every ſuch thought will upbraid us out of our lazineſs and negligence; we ſhall hear always ſounding in our ears the words of *Jeſus* to his *diſciples*, *What! can ye not watch with me one hour; and yet do you expect to reign with me for ever?* or thoſe to the *Church of Laodicea*, *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me upon my throne; as I have overcome, and am ſat down with my Father on his throne.*

And now, *Reader*, if you find I have done you any ſervice, if you think your ſelf under any obligation to *me*, the *return* I beg from you is, that you will *firſt* offer praiſe and thanks unto God; and *next*, whenever you are in the vigour of the ſpirit, and the ardours of faith and love before God in prayer, put up theſe, or the like petitions for me, which I now offer up for my ſelf.

O my

O My God, and my Father, increaſe the knowledge of thy Word, and the grace of thy Spirit in me. Enable me to perfect holineſs in thy fear, and to hold faſt the ſtedfaſtneſs of my hope unto the end. Pardon all the ſins and errors of my life; and accept of my imperfect ſervices through Jeſus Chriſt. And becauſe, though, after all we can do, we are unprofitable ſervants, thy infinite bounty will yet certainly recompenſe our ſincere endeavours to promote thy glory; let me find my reward from thee; or rather do thou thy ſelf vouchſafe to be my reward. I ſhould have ever thought my ſelf unworthy to have put up this petition to thee, O thou glorious and incomprehenſible Majeſty, had not thine own Goodneſs, thine own Spirit, kindled this ambition in me. Behold! what manner of love is this, that we ſhould be called the ſons of GOD! theſe are the words of thy ſervant St. John: *and now therefore my ſoul can never be at reſt, till I awake at the laſt day after thy likeneſs; I can never be ſatisfied till I behold thy glory: which vouchſafe me, I beſeech thee, by thy mercy and thy faithfulneſs; by the ſufferings and interceſſion of thy dearly beloved Son.*

FINIS.